

STORY

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The Editors, STORY,
126 Calle del 14 Abril,
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Dear Sirs:

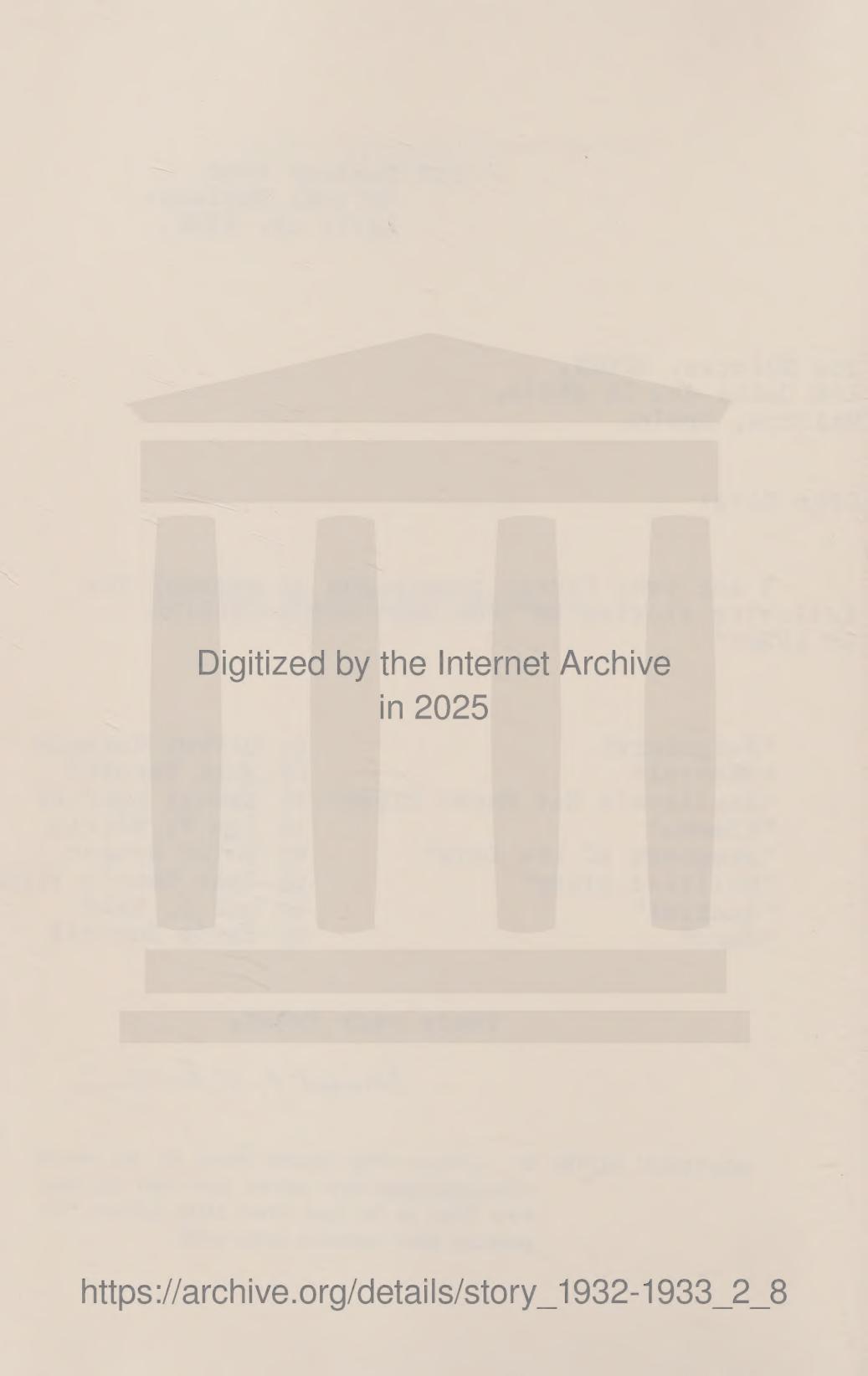
I ask your formal permission to reprint the following stories in "THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1932:"

"Neighbors"	by Oliver Gossman
"Sherrel"	by Whit Burnett
"Napoleon's Hat Under Glass"	by Manuel Komroff
"Kimono"	by Ira V. Morris
"Shepherd of the Lord"	by Peter Neagoe
"Untitled Story"	by Jose Garcia Villa
"Quarrel"	by Leo L. Ward
"Sand"	by Wanda Burnett

Yours very truly,

Edward J. O'Brien

EDITORS' NOTE: Mr. O'Brien's letter honors Story; for the second consecutive year more stories have been reprinted from Story in the Best Short Story volumes than from any other magazine in the world.



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AUGUST

STORY

VOL. II, No. 8

The only magazine devoted solely to the
Short Story

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1932

EDITORS: WHIT BURNETT
MARTHA FOLEY
126, Calle del 14 de Abril
Palma, Majorca, Spain

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Charles Kendall O'Neill, former editor of the Dartmouth Jack O'Lantern, is a resident of Alcudia, Majorca.... Erskine Caldwell, now in Mount Vernon, Maine, author of American Earth and Tobacco Road, has just finished a new novel and is preparing another volume of short stories (Scribner's)... Ernesto Giménez Caballero, founder of *La Gaceta Literaria*, Madrid, and widely known Spanish author, wrote the introduction to the Spanish section of Samuel Putnam's European Caravan... The translation is by Victor Llona of Paris... Zochtchenko's satires are well known to Story readers in the translations by Helena Clayton of Chicago... Carlton Brown, one of the most promising young Americans in Europe writing American scene material, lives in Saint-Paul (A. M.), France... Vivia Sortor, now in Central Europe, passed a winter at the Ports of Pollensa and Soller, Majorca... Michael Foster is a Seattle newspaperman... E. P. O'Donnell, who has appeared in Scribner's, lives in New Orleans... Martha Foley's Martyr is to be included in a book, Boston Tea Party, now in preparation.

FATHER

by

Charles Kendall O'Neill

FRANCISCO was in trouble again. I could tell by the way his fat cheeks were tightened up in the solemn expression he had worn two weeks before when his year-old daughter had just managed to live through a bad case of grippe. With no doctor within twenty miles of Urba, the throat-cracking cough had been successfully fought with a combination of green herb stuff boiled for its vapors, big candles given to the Virgin by the mother, and some creosote that I found in my bag.

The morning sun was pouring down on the market place. By the wall against which I was leaning a small puppy was peacefully chewing his mother's ear. I couldn't understand Francisco's sadness. Particularly as he was carrying in his arms his main reason for joy in this life, his two-year-old son. Small Antonio's three sisters were close to Francisco's heart but Antonio was particularly his own.

"Goo' night," said Francisco glumly.

He was proud of his English. He said good night to us at all hours of the day and knew all the numbers from one to ten except eight and nine. We had called him Goodnight for three weeks before finding out his name.

"Good morning," I said. "What's the matter?"

He turned Antonio around in his arms and swept up his one-piece garment. The triangle and underwear are unknown among Mallorquin babies. Antonio's rump was covered over with a piece of white cloth soaked in olive oil.

"Antonio has sat in the fire."

"*Qué lástima.*" I said. "How did it happen?"

Francisco swept the dress down and shifted the weight of the child with tremendous care.

"He was playing in the kitchen last night. We have the pan of hot coals for heating on cold nights. You know them?"

"Yes, yes, I know them."

"Antonio tired himself and sat down in the pan."

I could picture the scene vividly. When Mallorquin children sit down, there is no cloth between them and their sitting place, they sit on themselves.

"*Pobrecito*," I said. "It must hurt."

"Yes," said Francisco. "He has grief there."

I reached out to rumple the boy's hair and he winced away and his face twisted up as though he was almost about to cry. Francisco looked concerned and the boy buried his face in his father's shoulder.

"He cannot help it," he said. "The burn makes him afraid."

He himself looked as though he was almost about to cry. I remembered my letter.

"Look, Francisco," I said, taking out the letter. "This just came. Do you have this one?"

Francisco swung Antonio over a little and looked at the stamp. It was a six-cent one with a picture of Garfield.

I ripped off the stamp and the corner of the envelope.

"No," he said, "that man's picture I do not have."

"Here," I said, "and if I get any different ones, I'll let you know."

A smile broke through his melancholy.

"Don't you want it?"

"I get them all the time," I said.

"Thank you," he said in English.

"Antonio is very young. He will get better fast," I said.

He looked down at the boy and the melancholy came rolling back over all the width of his face again.

"Yes," he said doubtfully. "Have you eaten?"

"Not yet."

With his free hand he made a gesture of pushing food into his mouth.

"I have to eat now," he said. "Will you come with me?"

"Thank you," I said, "but I have asked Maria to make her special soup for me this noon at the inn."

"What kind?"

"Potato."

"Good," he said, "Then another time. *Buenos dias.*"

"Goodby. I hope Antonio gets better."

He thought a minute.

"Goo' night," he said, and walked off down the street.

The puppy was getting more and more triumphant in its worrying. The mother opened one sleepy eye, reached around and tried to swallow her son's leg. The puppy yanked his leg back indignantly and tried to climb on his mother's head. The mother flattened her jaw on the warm ground between her paws and yawned deeply. I yawned too and after a while went over to the inn to stir up something to eat...

It was two weeks before I saw Francisco with his son again. In between I had given him several cups of rum and he had set me up to several and we had talked sadly about the brave music that had been made in the days when the king's yacht used to stop in at Puerto de Urba now and again. He was not much of a man for change. The band of the English warships had played Chopin's Funeral March once years before when an English ornithologist happened to die in Urba at the time of their annual visit and Francisco still considered it the peak of all music. Whenever he took down his trumpet and helped out the Urba *zaranga* he would plead with them to learn the March. The night that he found out that I knew it, we sang it together with great joy for more than twenty minutes. Holy Week was a real time of sorrow for him. He had set his heart on having the whole *zaranga* play it during the mournful procession of Friday night when the body of Jesus was carried through the town but a special trip to Palma and a day's search in the music shops failed to produce the music. The band played its usual dirge which had something of the wild wails of the Moors in it.

He was scarcely even consoled by the joy of Easter morning. At dawn the procession carrying the statue of Mary started from outside the walls on one end of the town and the other group carrying the risen

Christ started from the other. At the moment of their meeting in the market place, the statue of Mary jumped three times in excitement at seeing her son again. Francisco helped carry Mary but even this honor didn't raise his spirits much. I thought he must have been worrying about Antonio.

It was a week after Easter when I found father and son together again. I had gone over to the tobacco shop for stamps and found Francisco buying cigarettes.

"How is Antonio these days?" I asked.

A tremendous smile started up on his face.

"Toni!" he called, "Toni!"

Antonio was in the front of the shop trying to pull a huge box of cigars down on his head. He refused to come.

"You will see," said Francisco.

He went to the front of the store and caught Antonio up in his arms. Antonio struggled but the father carried him back to the counter triumphantly. He bent the boy back over his arm so that he faced away from me and pulled back the dress with all the pride of a jeweller opening a case. There was scarcely a trace of a burn. It was all firm, unscarred and rosy. Francisco slapped the rump in delight.

"There!" he said. "Isn't that beautiful?"

He whacked it again.

"Beautiful," I said reverently. "Beautiful."

THE MIDWINTER GUEST

by

Erskine Caldwell

IT was the first time in his whole life that Orland Trask had done such a thing. Even Orland's wife could not say afterward what had got into Orland to cause him to tell the strange man from the eastern-country that he might remain in the house and stay for the night. And it was the last time. Both Orland and Emma knew better than to do a thing like that again.

The stranger from the eastern-country knocked on the door that evening while Orland and his wife were eating supper. Orland heard him knock at the beginning, but he did not make an effort to get up from the table to answer a knocking on his door at supper-time.

"It's nobody I want dealings with," Orland said to his wife. "A man who would come knocking on a neighbor's door at meal-time hadn't ought to be listened to. Finns and Swedes are the only people I ever heard of who didn't have better sense."

"Maybe some of the Morrises are sick, Orland," Emma said. "I'll go see."

"Stay sat in your seat, woman. Even those Morrises have got better sense than to take to illness at meal-time."

The knocking became louder. The man out there was pounding on the storm-door with a heavy oak walking stick.

Orland's wife turned and looked out the window behind her. It was still snowing. The wind had died down with nightfall and the flakes were floating lightly against the panes.

The stranger at the door was impatient. He opened the storm-door and banged on the panels of the house-door and against the clapboards with the knotted end of his walking-stick, and then he turned and beat against the door with the heels of his studded boots. He was making a

lot of noise out there for a stranger, more noise than Orland had ever before heard at his door.

"I'll go see," Emma said again, rising from her chair at the other end of the table.

"You stay sat in your seat, woman," Orland told her.

Orland's wife sank back into the chair, but barely had she settled herself when suddenly the door burst open with a gust of snow and icy wind, and the strange man stood there glaring at them. He was wearing black leather breeches and a red and green mackinaw and a brown fur cap pulled so far down over his ears that only his eyes and nose were showing. Snow had clung to his eyelashes and had frozen in long thin icicles that reached almost to his mouth. He stomped and blew, knocking the snow from his boots and shaking it from his cap and mackinaw. The heavy oak walking-stick rapped as loudly as ever against the door-sill. The man had not entered the house, but the door was open and the frosty air blew inside.

Orland's back was turned to the door and the first that he knew of the man bursting in was when the icy blast of snow and wind struck him. His wife, Emma, had seen everything from the beginning, but she was afraid to say or to do anything until Orland turned around. She knew that a man who would burst open a door would not wait to be asked into the room.

"Holy Mother," the stranger who stood in the doorway muttered. "The bones of my body are stiff as ice."

He came into the room then, his mittens under his arm, and his hands full of snow that he had scooped from the doorstep. He shut the door with the heel of his boot and walked around the table at which Orland was sitting, and rubbed his hands with the new snow.

Orland had not said a word. He sat glaring at the heavily clothed man who had entered his house unbidden.

Emma asked the strange man, guardedly, if his hands were frozen. While she waited for him to answer, she glanced again at Orland.

"Holy Mother," the stranger said again. "The bones of my body are stiff as ice."

He continued to rub the new snow over the backs of his hands and around his fingers. He still did not go near the heater in the corner.

"My name is Phelps," he said, "and I come from the eastern-country of Maine. Down there the townsmen take in cold men from the frost at night."

"Well," Orland said, pushing back his chair from the table, "the townsmen in this part of the State have got the sense to stay indoors when they have no good business out in a frosty night."

Emma went to the door and brought back a bowl of new snow. She placed the bowl on the carpet in front of the stranger who had said his name was Phelps. He began to unlace his boots while Emma got ready to take away the supper dishes.

"Freeze your toes, too?" Orland said. "Any man who would walk out and freeze his hands and feet ought to have them drop off with frost-bite."

Phelps removed his boots and socks and began rubbing his toes with the new snow.

"Am a poor man," Phelps said, "and I'm not a houseowner. My brother wrote me a letter to come over to New Hampshire and help him peel pulpwood. Started out walking, and I've got the high montains yet to cross. Guess you will take me in and put me up for the night."

Orland filled his pipe and struck a match before he answered. He then waited until Emma had gone into the kitchen again.

"The country would be a heap better off without fools like you walking through the snow and frost to New Hampshire in dead of winter, and it's my duty to turn you out and let the frost finish its job of freezing you. That's what I ought to do to a man who would come into a neighbor's house without asking. The country has got too many like you in it now. But my wife would take-on if I was to turn you out, so I'll have to let you stay for the night. Will give you warning, though; the next time your brother writes you to come over to New Hampshire to help him peel pulpwood, it had better be before winter sets in. You won't get aid here again. Won't stand to have strangers coming into my house unbidden."

Phelps took his feet out of the new snow and put them on the sheet of newspaper Orland's wife had spread for him. He made no effort to move or to thank Orland for permitting him to stay for the night. He just sat and stared at the snow falling against the window. He was an old man, much older than Orland. He looked to be at least eighty years old. His hair was almost white, but his body was firm and muscular. If he had been less than six feet tall, he would have appeared to be over-weight.

Presently Emma came back into the room and carried out the bowl of melting snow and the damp newspaper, and then she handed the old man a clean bath towel. He dried his hands and feet and put his socks and boots on again.

"Show me the place to sleep, and good-night," he said wearily.

"Guess you will want the use of the sparechamber," Orland said, scowling at the old man. "Well, you're going to get it. Could give you some blankets and put you on the carpet, but I'm not. Am giving you the use of the sparechamber. My wife will fix you a plate of breakfast in the morning, if you are in here on time. Nobody eats a breakfast in my house after six-thirty."

Emma lit a lamp and showed the old man to the spare chamber. When she returned, Orland had begun reading the paper and he had nothing to say to her.

Just before he got up to go to bed, Orland called his wife.

"Give that man who said his name was Phelps a helping of beans and potatoes for breakfast," he said, "but don't give him but one plateful. Don't want to be the cause of prolonging the lives of people who walk through the snow and frost to New Hampshire in dead of winter."

Orland went to bed then, leaving Emma to clean the room and to set the chairs against the wall. He was asleep long before she had finished her work.

When Orland got up and lit the lamp the next morning at five-thirty, he listened for several minutes before calling Emma. He went to the wall that separated their room from the spare chamber and listened for a sound of the old man. The only sound that he could hear anywhere in the house was the breathing of Emma.

After calling his wife, Orland went to the kitchen range and opened the drafts and shook down the ashes. The fire-box was ablaze in a minute or two, and he went to the next room and replenished the fire in the heater. Outside, it had stopped snowing during the night, and there was a crust on the new snow.

Breakfast was ready at six-thirty, and Emma set the dishes aside on the range to wait until the old man came into the next room. She knew that Orland would call for his breakfast at almost any minute, but she delayed placing it on the table as long as she could.

"It's time for breakfast, Emma," Orland said. "Why haven't you got it ready?"

"Am putting it on the table right away," she said. "Maybe you had best go call Mr. Phelps while I'm doing it."

"Will be damned if I go call him," Orland said. "Told the old fool last evening what time breakfast was ready, and if he doesn't get up when it's ready, then I'm not going to wear out my shoes running to call him. Sit down and let's eat, Emma."

Emma sat down without a word.

After they had finished, Orland filled his pipe. He took a match from his coat pocket, but he waited a minute or longer before striking it.

"Clear away the dishes, Emma," he said.

Orland's wife carried out the dishes and plates to the kitchen. She placed the dish of beans on the range to keep them warm a while longer.

When she came back into the room for the rest of the tableware, Orland motioned to her to listen to him.

"That old fool from the eastern-country and going to New Hampshire to help his brother peel pulpwood had better be setting out toward the high mountains. He's already missed the breakfast we had for him. Will give him another ten minutes, and if he's not out of the house by then, I'll throw him out, leather breeches and all."

Emma went back into the kitchen to wash the dishes while Orland filled the heater with maple chunks. One look at Orland's face was enough to frighten her out of the room.

Orland waited longer than ten minutes, and each second that passed

made him more angry. It was almost eight o'clock then, an hour after breakfast was over. Orland got up and opened the house-door and the storm-door. His face was aflame and his motions were quick and jerky.

"Take-care, woman," he said to Emma. "Take-care!"

Emma came to the kitchen door and stood waiting to see what Orland was going to do. She did not know what on earth to do when Orland became as angry as he was then.

"Stand back, Emma," he said. "Stand back out of my way."

He began running around the room, looking as if he himself did not know what he was likely to do that minute or the next.

"Orland..." Emma said, standing in the kitchen door where she could get out of his way if he should turn towards her.

"Take-care, woman," he shouted at her. "Take-care!"

Orland was piling all the furniture in the corner of the room beside the heater. He jerked up the carpet and the rugs, pulled down the curtains, and carried all the old newspapers and magazines to the fire. He was acting strangely, Emma knew, but she did not know what on earth he was going to do nor how to stop him. She had never seen Orland act like that before in all her life, and she had lived with him for almost fifty years.

"Orland—" she said again, glancing backward to the outside kitchen door to make certain of escape.

"Take-care, woman," Orland said. "Take-care!"

The furniture, rugs and carpet, and newspapers were blazing like a May grass fire within a few minutes. Smoke and flame rose to the ceiling and flowed down the walls. Just when Emma thought surely that Orland would be burned alive in the fire, he ran out the door and into the yard. She ran screaming through the other door.

Emma's first thought when she saw the house burning, was where would they live now. Then she remembered their other house, the ten-room brick house down the road near the village. Orland would not live in it because he had said that the frame house would have to be worn out before they could go to live in their brick house. He had been saying that for twenty years, and during all of that time the fine brick

house of ten rooms had been standing at waste. Now, at last, they could live in it.

There were no people passing along the road so early in the morning, but John White saw the smoke and flame from his house across the flats, and he came running over with a bucket of water. By the time he got there, all the water had splashed out of the bucket, and he set it down and looked at the fire.

"Am sorry to see that, Orland," he said.

"Save your pity for some who are in need of it," Orland said.

"Well, you've got good insurance on it, anyway," John said. "That will help a lot. When you collect the insurance money, you can go and live in your brick house in style and good comfort."

"Not going to collect the insurance," Orland said.

"You're not! Why won't you collect it?"

"Because I set fire to the house myself."

"Set fire to it yourself! Good God, Orland, you must have lost your mind and reason!"

"Had a blamed good reason for doing it."

John White walked away and turned around and came back where Orland was standing. He looked at Orland and then at the burning house and at Orland again.

Orland began telling John about the old man who had said his name was Phelps. He started at the beginning, when Phelps knocked on the storm-door at meal-time. Then he told John about giving the old man permission to spend the night in the house after he had walked in unbidden.

"But I told him to get up in time for breakfast at six-thirty," Orland said. "I told him that, and the old fool heard me, too. When this morning came, I waited five, ten minutes for him to come and eat. He didn't even get up out of bed. He just stayed there, sleeping. Then I sat and waited a whole hour for him to get up, but he still just stayed in the sparechamber and slept. Am not the kind to allow the country to get cluttered up with men with no more sense than to start out walking to New Hampshire in dead of winter to peel pulpwood. That old fool

said he started out from somewhere in the eastern-country to walk over there through the snow and frost, and he hadn't even got as far as the high mountains. If I hadn't stopped him here, he'd have gone to some town and couldn't go further. Then he'd have been a burden on the State, because there's not a town down-Maine that would have claimed him, not even a town in the eastern-country would have given him citizenship."

Suddenly, Emma screamed and fell down on her back. Orland ran to see what the matter with her was.

While he was away attending to Emma, John White saw something move behind one of the windows in the sparechamber. Before he could go closer to see what it was, the roof over that part of the building fell in, sending up a shower of sparks and fragments of black embers.

Orland came back beside John and stood watching the house as it sank lower and lower to the ground.

"Lived in this town a long time," John said, "almost any man's lifetime, I guess, but I never before saw a man burn his house down just for durn meanness. Don't guess you'd have done it, if it wasn't for the fact that you own a brick house that's a lot better shelter than this frame one was."

"That old fool who said he was on his way to New Hampshire to help his brother peel—"

"Well, all I've got to say is that it looks to me like you could have asked him just once to get up out of bed and clear out of the house. Doesn't appear to me like a man ought to set fire to and burn down a good frame house just because a guest won't get out of bed in time for breakfast."

"Maybe I wouldn't have done it," Orland said, "but after I had thought all night about it, there wasn't any other way to treat him. Why! that old fool who said his name was Phelps opened my door and come in without my bidding, right when I was sitting at the table at meal-time. You don't guess I'd have gone and asked him to get out of bed, do you, after he had done a thing like that?"

"Guess you would have gone and told him to get up, all right, if you hadn't been trying for nearly twenty years to find a way to move into your brick house. This frame house was just about worn out, anyway, Orland. Wasn't no sense in burning him up just to get the house down and out of your way."

"Couldn't take the risk," Orland said. "This house has always been cussed mean. It was just hard-headed enough to have stood in good repair right up to the day I took ill and died."

FROM A JESUIT'S NOTE-BOOK

by

E. Giménez Caballero

I HEARD the tumult from my window. Arising from the new lemon-green foliage of the trees.

I applied my ear to the garden's chest to locate the focus of the voices. At once, attention laid its perceiving eye-lashes upon the left sector, behind the pond: the chapel.

It was seven-twenty p. m. The weather was warm (April). The air smelled of orange-blossoms. The orange-trees in the fruit garden cancelled, by means of an absolute essence, all the accidental perfumes of the remaining vegetation. I descended slowly to investigate. I did not wish to verify that which I already knew. I already knew that which I was going to verify.

On the stairs, near the parlor, it was Father Luis who dealt me the first blow with his malicious and elliptic air: "*Your friend... eh?*"

When I reached the chapel, I barely had time to exchange a glance with him. They were hustling him away roughly, in the midst of a group of boys and fathers. He was defending himself like a wild young goat.

In his glance I thought that I could perceive a splendid jubilation. Which, suddenly, sank into the depths of my own self. That glance, by cutting off the rope that held me, sent me off the kerb into the blue, free

air and caused me to fall down with the shaking of a tin pail knocking against the walls, until I hit the abysmal, hopeless and liquefied gloom at the bottom. (But did I find the bottom?)

I entered the dormitory with a ready, absent, evanescent conscience. With a hole within myself. As if it were not I who was entering. But neither another. I mean—the sole and feeble sensation I experienced—that it was I who actually was entering, I, untied from a foreign mold, emptied of a foreign mind, with a radical extirpation of I did not know what, as if they had pulled out all the teeth of my soul.

While I crossed the dormitory, my eyes must have had the stupid dullness of lead, with no expression save the false and fugitive one from the night-lamp's reflection before the altar of the Most Pure. And this because there was such a debate—slow, turbid, laborious and secret—within me, that on the surface (pupils, motions, lips), everything *had* to remain neutral, insignificant.

By an oblique decision, with a reflex, almost involuntary will—an automatic product of something consuetudinary, I leaned out of the window, above the garden.

This blind act had an unbasting effect upon my conscience. Its very mechanisticity provoked another mechanisticity. But the latter more liberated, more recovered, more useful for the service of myself. Like a scattering of ranks at school before a prank, the shreds of remembrances, the associations of things, the will to wander and to think, began to extend themselves and to run over my mind as if it had been a playground.

It was to be seen that my habit of leaning every mild night out of this embrasure to unsew—in solitude—the bastings of the entire day (dreams and repressions, ardors and exhaustions, caresses to old wounds, anxieties for unseizable objects and senseless prayers) had created in my system another habit of psychic fluency, of sentimental outpouring. The window's handle would set my engine going. It connected me. It proved a great advantage to possess this automatic junction, and thus be able to

issue forth, without much effort, from the asphyxiating inertia I had been plunged into within the chapel by *his* glance. What an ultimate, grand night, that one, when I leaned out into the emptiness of night! A final and definitive vigil in which I buried myself perhaps for ever, with that clearer and happier effulgence of the fire just before it goes out! Never had my spirit reached such tensions of altitude, of fervor and of spasm, of frantic and sweet insomnia. How grateful I was to Father Suarez for his intercession on that night that they leave me at my window without coming down to sup, without going to bed until dawn! And that they should not break that permission, so tenaciously acquired! (Which happened on the following day.)

Because of my concentrated and pallid nature, they believed it a duty in the college to countenance my watched over solitariness. I had already insinuated the possibility of my becoming soon a novice. My greatest enjoyment was, while all the others slept, to lean out at night towards the garden, towards the coagulated night, towards the irrigating ditches among the trees and the thick splashing of the water spout in the fountain where the Virgin—the palms of her hands held downwards in a suffusion of rays—darted forth a festoon of water.

Once *he* had disappeared, all that would disappear—I used to think many a night.

That night, however, cold and sharp, in which the event took place, was, because of it all, my last in all senses of the word.

I am still busy rebuilding it... My possibilities of exultation were locally distended, with an agility that resembled that of the beast smelling the deadly shaft. I hurdled over recollections and ancient emotions as though I wished to make of it all my eternal prey; a reed-mat for the road, a quintessential and constant wallet, a feverish epitome of friendship, a summary of cordial events... A packet of essences which, even today, when I handle it—dirty and faded as it is—impregnates my fingers with conjuring evocations...

I may state precisely that the theme from which I started that night, at the window, on that fundamental survey of my spirit, on that veritable—and first and last—examination of my conscience, was, naturally enough, the tremendous event which had just taken place in the chapel.

A tremendous event which—I have already said so—could not take me by surprise. For I had foreseen it. On the contrary, it could but appear to me the simplest and least complicated thing in the world.

The others, of course, could not think likewise. I was his intimate friend, and I admired him. Therefore, never could I have judged him, dared pour the slightest criticism over the least of his actions.

That is to say.... as far as judging him, as far as scrutinizing his conduct, his...—at the time I did not know how to qualify it: now I would call it determinism—of course I used to do that.

I used to do it continually. Will it be believed that I thought of nothing else but *him* when I leaned out of my window by night over the garden?

What a constant revolution and what a tenacious subversion such a conduct could bring into my own! Daily delights, astonishments, sadnesses! Such a downpour of strange, intoxicating confidences which he used to present to me (lying, no doubt) throughout the evenings in the gallery next to the parlor, where we used to sit or walk while the others were at play!

But have a care: my reiterated analysis (in the hours of solitude) concerning that being, concerning the whole hallucinating figure of my friend, did not allow judgments of positive nor negative valorization. I never said: *So and so is so and so...* My conclusions were always comparative. Comparative with my own self, egolatric...

For that reason the boy attracted me irresistibly. Because I used to see in him, I might say, my own self, raised to the highest degree, my own personality at its plenitude, the opulent excess which I lacked. Speaking, speaking with him, I felt that I was being saturated with magically desirable qualities; I made one with him, I transsubstantiated myself.

Now I believe (which gives me still an intense delight) that he must have sought in me something similar to what I postulated from him. I believe now that he also must have been (this I could never have imagined at the time) an incomplete, unsatisfied, inharmonious being, somewhat wretched. One could not understand otherwise—if at all—that pleasant assent he granted my company and my intimacy... That calm with which he became impregnated when next to me, that suave and great change I used to give him on the few occasions when he confided in me... Yes, yes. I also influenced him, I have not the slightest doubt of it now... It was no mere vanity that joined him to me... Because out of vanity... exclusively out of vanity, as a sole founding and attractive element, he could not have withstood my long friendship. To find in me only the money box of mud in which gleefully to throw his coins of gold and hear them tinkle as they grazed the walls, no. And again no. Something else linked him to me. Something besides vanity, besides self-exaltation. Even though I provoked it abundantly in him by silences which were coagulated by fervor, by my justifications, enthusiastic and yet poetic, radically poetic, of his conduct. (That conduct which caused him so much trouble, during his life at school.)

Since I am confessing, I must confess it all. I leaned not out toward the garden during the tempered nights merely to inhale the constellations and the lunar quiet, nor to concert with myself, nor to obey delicate orders for solitude and retirement...

Exalted divagations of the tranquil nights! In which he played the absolute rôle of contrast, in which he was my demon, in which I set to praying to undo him, as Father Suarez had recommended that I should do when I confessed to him my great trouble. What desires to cast him away from me, to remain alone with my own self! First struggles of my religious vocation! ... I, who have known no woman, who am getting old under this stiff and mediocre cassock, lost in this other college, without glory, without pain and without strength... With a mania, insensitive... selfish, sour. So sour with the small boys. I shall remember those first struggles like my last ones, the serious ones, for the love of God. Those

were the delights—unique—of my spiritual puberty! Now, already... Since then, already... The moment he left the college I was extinguished like a lamp out of which the oil has been withdrawn. I became grey. I sank into an absence of color. I vanished like a shadow upon the wall when the focus which projected and outlined it is shifted...

I took the orders, I entered the Order, yes... But merely out of inertia, out of an impossibility to recover myself.

And the strangest thing of all—so much so that it is degenerating into a most secret almost alcoholic vice, is that I do no longer succeed in exciting myself but by remembering him. Remembering him gives me fresh energy, chastity, impetus, religious vocation... Remembering him renovates me. I blossom out like the springtime, really. I feel that I am returning to that zone of my life where I was left interrupted, as though the master worker who had begun me had returned, he who had to leave one day, and set about continuing me... Remembering him so incites and reanimates me, that even now I feel loquacious watching how my pencil runs over this school note-book flyingly, without scratching off one single word, saying what I never dared say, because I thought myself too dull, too unskilled—and, above all, too cowardly—to say something thus... And why should I say it? I do not know. But I notice that I am saving something while I write this, something which I do not clearly see.

Well, where was I?... This is what comes from not being accustomed to writing... and of such events... I have lost the thread, and know not how to retrieve it, being dragged hither and thither by my recollections and guessing ill the labyrinths which I had to cross...

I shall reread what I have written, starting with that paragraph... "Since I am confessing, I must confess it all. I leaned not out toward the garden during the tempered nights merely to inhale the constellations and the lunar quiet, nor to concert with myself, nor to obey delicate orders for solitude and retirement." (Good... Now I know what I wanted to say....)

...but I leaned out of my window to serve somebody better than myself. Him. To protect him against his own flights. Every night he

escaped. He went out through the kitchen. He walked all along the wall in the darkness. With an agility and an elegance which I believe he increased because he knew that I was admiring him from the embrasure, pursuing him into the night. He had made a ladder out of the wall, by digging holes in the bricks. He required but a moment to climb it like a cat. Many a time he bid me good-bye. From the top, like a rider.

We talked during recess. Not always... Of a sudden he would abandon me to mix in some uproar, in some group contention. Also out of a wild desire to play, to jump, to run, to yell, to laugh, which seized him.

But as soon as he wished to prepare some escapade, he would seek me, he would compel me to listen to him. He said everything... How he enjoyed telling me things! The other boys paid no attention to him, elbowed him off with their own vanities, wrangled with him over the events, and at times he had to swallow his own adventures. Not so with me. I was for him all ears and attention. And he for me the greatest spectacle of my life.

Undoubtedly his speech possessed a radical witchcraft. His aspirate "s's," his gypsy diminutives, his shrill and salty metaphors and that facial economy of his gestures, and that perfect management of his features when he recounted something. Generally, what he recounted was not what made one shudder, but the timely wink of one eye-lid. The leer of the lips. The aplomb of a "God himself is no bull-fighter for me"... The handling of the fingers for the purpose of peppering the sentences and the interjections. The elegant ability to spit suddenly. The placing with effrontery, or a tough-like liturgy, when seated, his parts within his trousers, as did no doubt those of whom he spoke, before they began to sing with the guitar.

Neither was my greatest astonishment his prowesses with the women or wine. They obsessed me, to be sure. Of course they did. Later my dreams answered for such an obsession. (How many of those women whom he described to me interruptedly—with sharp, spasmodic recollections, clicking his tongue like castanets against the inside front of his teeth—I used to see mixed with my daily life, vague, almost grotesque, like sweet leavings of a banquet, and I like a dog would chase after

them, in order to chew on the remnants, with all the morbidity of an adolescent, sequestered and perturbed recluse!...)

But no, as I said : neither his parties at the *Manco* inn, nor in the *Chiribiya*, nor his love affairs with La Marina and La Peinetas and La Jacinta and La Paca, the physician's maid, and with that fiancée of Manolo's, he of the second division, whom she left, did crush me, did dazzle me, did bewitch me as much as his uninterrupted show of rebellion, of daring, of passing everything—as he used to say—between his legs.

He possessed a unique repertory of blasphemies. To him any belief was a bull-fighter's jump. To him no one, nothing was respectable. He denied, because... I, at times, would beg him to recount to me his confessions with Father Suarez. But this, how strange, he, who blabbered all to me, he never confided in me. Why? I have never succeeded in making this clear to myself.

His constant and hot rebellion did me no end of good, without my realizing it. (Now I do realize it...) My soul, sick and flabby, rivetted with mysticism, with cowardice, with absurd loves, with repulsive perturbations, with roses and dirt, used to find in those energetic, dry, sunny protests of his an exquisite hygiene, an ideal temperature in which to convalesce... "I soil God and the Virgin, His Mother, and the divine pyx"—he would say to me of a sudden, serenely, only to expose that to me as a maturely fixed criterium. One—while making a slight hypocritical gesture would rejoice inside, wishing, without success, timidly to add: "I too."

For this reason I was not at all surprised by that scandal at twilight, in the chapel. How could I have been? Since I had once witnessed the same sacrilege? And always justifying it all? *Even that!*...

Of course should the others have known his moral structure from the inside, the fidelity of that being to himself, his loyal and admirable imperatives of conduct, they would also have absolved him, perhaps, why not? congratulated him...

He had been punished for a week, closely pursued by Father Astol-

fi's hard watchfulness. On half rations, in the dark chamber, sweeping the dormitories and constrained to confess every day in the evening.

I had been unable to get near him longer than for one minute the day before, climbing the stairs, after recess... I found him frantic. "I am thus, and thus, and thus!" he said to me, congested, acting terribly with his right hand, the fingers of which he placed symbolically in a sexual hieroglyph.

It was Father Astolfi discovered him. And he who, secretly, summoned the other monks who happened to be near. (Behind whom a few of the boys came by stealth—and these were the ones who raised that outcry and that half-jubilant scandal.) The boys recounted it to me later. They had guessed it more than anything else. They saw him only when he was buttoning up the belt of his trousers, calmly, before the very monks, without raising from the fall-stool upon which he had sat himself, in front of the altar of the Sacred Heart, his face lit up with violence, with excitement, with choler. (And with that breathlessness inherent to a sharp satisfied pleasure.)

I—as I have said—hardly could exchange with him one glance. (That glance of his of triumph and domination, which plunged me into prostration.)

They talked of a secret vice, of the devil within his body, of I do not know how many things...

No one had understood that enormous act of protest, of rebellion, of energetic solitude, of perturbation and not of masturbation, before the deity, who symbolized for him the pressure of the entire college upon his life.

No one, no one understood that affirmation from one power to another, of mystic radicalism. A sacrilege which was, strictly, a sacrifice...

Now it stuns me to reconstruct the casual motivation—a splendid one—of that awful and unforgettable scene!

When he came out of the chapel, I knew that I would never see him again...

I lacked courage to follow him... Perhaps I might have saved myself... Doubtlessly!

But I was weak, and shall always be so... And thus I live... And the fact is that, now, when I catch one of the boys in my class in some unusual, extraordinary, disrespectful act, I am implacable. If necessary, I beat him up, I martyrize him with a rage which I cannot explain myself... Why? Everybody here hates me. I am, I do not doubt it, hateful... I used to feel it then... But *he* saved me... pushed me with his clear brutality, with his virgin instinct, towards some frank states of conscience, towards an affectionate elegance which I have never felt since... My approaches to God were perceptible to me... I felt the whole of myself in a potent ecstasy... With his absence came my nullity, my stoppage. Why should these alluvia and these semi-geological quenchings happen within my body? It is very difficult to seek explanations to certain things of the soul. I would ask my superiors, I mean those I esteemed... But I know that no one understands me here... My sole consolation—a provisional solution—is to fall, as today, after the class, to letting the pencil run upon this oil-cloth covered note-book.

—Translated From The Spanish
by VICTOR LLONA

THE ENCHANTED VILLAGES

by

Mikail Zochtchenko

THE resolution passed by the District Executive Committee called for a most rigorous and heartless campaign against the one unending evil—the unlawful distillation of vodka.

"What the devil do they need it for, I can't make out," said the president. "Here we give them all sorts of entertainments, theatres and all that, we introduce learning to them... Finally, there is the thirty percent vodka—yet they have to keep on drinking that poison."

"Too weak and expensive," came a half-audible voice from one of the members. "Chiefly makes you run out into the yard, that thirty percent kind."

"What's that?"

"Just remarking to a friend here... It takes at least two bottles of the thirty percent, but the first grade—what a whack you get just from one," continued the same voice in a still more subdued manner.

"And no mistake!" put in his neighbor.

"So there we are comrades," continued the president. "All our work of the last weeks has led us to nothing. We will have to organize a 'Troika' * and send it out incognito. Or else, if we announce the date they will go under cover and the music will start all over again."

"Quite right. And we shall have to take Fedor, the driver, along. He knows all their hiding places. He'll smell them out."

"As to that, there won't be much work in trailing them; every hut is a distillery. I guess even the—" the president looked around to make sure there were no outsiders. "The main thing is to catch them red-hand-

* commission of three

ed, and anyone found drunk is to be taken to the station immediately; there we will know how to handle them. Special attention to be given to the villages of Semenovskoe and Streshnevo. How many inspectors have we sent there! but to those people it's just like water off a duck. They go on concocting it just the same."

"We shall have to send there our most trusted men. For the smell from those villages is strong enough to tempt even the devil."

Three members were elected and commissioned.

"Comrade Matushin," said the president, standing on the doorsteps while the members of the new Troika, pulling their furcoats closer, were getting comfortably seated on the sled like a party preparing for a wolf-hunt, "Comrade Matushin, remember chiefly to catch them with the goods."

He turned to the driver.

"And you, Fedor, show them the places and when you find anyone drunk just put him on your sled and drive him over here at once, while you others stay there, so as not to lose any time."

Fedor, the driver, in a knee-length furcoat with a scarf slung several times around his collar was patiently waiting on his high seat for the members to get settled. Now he slowly turned his face toward the president, blew his nose hard, turned up the hem of his coat to wipe it and then answered:

"Just as you say, we'll trail them."

"Come on, move!"

"A cinch we are dressed warmly, or the cold would get us in the fields," said the second member, a gloomy looking man with enormous sidewhiskers.

"Feels like twenty below."

"That is, if you measure it by Reamur, Comrade Matushin," said the third member, a small man in a fur cap with earflaps and with astonishment expressed in his elevated eyebrows, "but take Celsius, for instance, and it would be much colder."

"The devil take them!" continued the second member. "I might be sitting in a warm room right now, but here..."

"And why, tell me, has such evil spread among the people? A person realizes well enough the damage he is doing to his health and to the state, but he cannot restrain himself. Where lies the reason for it?"

"He cannot help himself," repeated the president of the Troika.

"Ignorance, Comrade Matushin," said the third member. "There he drinks that homebrew, seething with by-products, and does not realize that he is undermining his health."

"Well, now we've got started we will make an end to it. They seem to be somewhat subsiding already."

"That depends," remarked the driver, untying his scarf and turning around to face the Troika. "It is true about some places. But take these two villages, Semenovskoe and Streshnevo. As the president said, there is no force that will conquer them."

"And what is the reason?" asked the second member.

"The devil only knows it, they act just like bewitched. How many investigators haven't we dispatched there—and no results whatsoever."

"They were bribed, perhaps, Comrade Matushin?" remarked half-questioningly the third member.

"That I couldn't tell," answered the driver.

Arrived at the crossroads, he asked:

"Where to now?"

"Trot right into Semenovskoe, what say!"

"But, aren't you afraid?" said the driver, and pulling the left rein, turned the horses to the other road.

When they had reached the village the president asked:

"Well, which hut shall we take first?"

"Whichever you please," replied Fedor, the driver, "you won't make a mistake... Well, let's start at this one."

He indicated with his finger a hut blackened by age, with a dilapidated entrance.

"Well, I'll go in and start the business. You wait here a while and then come up. I'll pretend that I want a drink and when you appear I'll hide the bottles under the table so you'll know where to look for them. But they don't even seem to be scareable. Really, what you would say

enchanted, by God!"

Fedor, the driver, climbed down and went in as the president of the Troika, Comrade Matushin, pointed over to the broken down doorway of the house.

"That is where drunkenness leads the people."

"Worthy of pity, Comrade Matushin," said the third member. "Here we are in a country that is first in this world in its riches, so to speak, and they live like pigs. We will have to make these trips more often, once a week to every village..."

Some five minutes later they pulled the horse up closer to the hut, all jumped out of the sled and rushed into the house.

Fedor, the driver, was sitting at the table. Before him was nothing but a teacup. On a bench, away from the table, sat the host himself. He did not jump up, but sort of indifferently looked at the newcomers.

The Troika members looked under the table and pulled out the bottles.

"That is enough of your jokes!" said the president. "Come on now, my pigeon, get ready to go with us."

The peasant got up slowly and began looking for his cap.

"What have you got here?" asked the second member, and after a look behind the stove, brought out three more bottles.

The host didn't turn around, continuing to look for his cap while scratching his back.

The second member, having put the bottles on the table, kept looking at them against the light. Suddenly he stopped as though struck by something he saw.

"What is it?" asked the third member.

The first one did not answer, still standing in the same position. After quite a while he spoke.

"Really, what masters they are, these children of Satan... You can see clear to Moscow..."

"What, are they as bright as tears?" asked the driver, coming up closer.

The third member advanced, looked at the bottles against the light

and also froze to the spot.

"Never did I see such vodka, Comrade Matushin!" he said at last.

An hour later the same sort of raid was made in Streshnevo. Two men were arrested and seven more bottles confiscated.

The second member placed all eleven bottles in a row on the table, then, in a crouching position, with eyes screwed to a slit, began gazing at them.

The third member also knelt beside him while the president with a frowning expression walked up and down the room rubbing his frozen hands. The driver, with the whip and his cap in his hands, spoke:

"You can raid the whole province but you will never find such vodka. The same in Semenovskoe as in Streshnevo. Because the best strength of all their men has gone into making it."

"Ah, Comrade Matushin! At a time when they should be busy building up things, here is what they are doing..."

"The Semenovskoe vodka should win the prize because of its clearness but the Streshnevo," continued Fedor, the driver, "though she is a bit murky, will get you; and how, brother, she grabs you! One glass is sufficient to throw you on your hind legs."

"Which is the Semenovskoe, that one there?" asked the president
"That very same," replied the first member.

"Yes, just like a maiden's tear," pensively added the second member.

"Before they distill it they put it out in the cold, then they cleanse it by all sorts of means, and out she comes, like God's own dew," the driver went on. "But, of course, it all depends on one's taste. Someone would give anything to have his vodka clear, so he can see to Moscow through it. Somebody else again demands that she have the strength of the devil and be capable of cooking your brains at a sip."

"Comrade Matushin, just take a look! That is from Semenovskoe, and this here is the Streshnevo. At a glance you perceive the difference."

"The devil's progeny!" said the second member. "If you don't look after them they will drink themselves to death. And where, I ask you, lies the reason?"

The president also took up the crouching position before the row of

bottles and shaking his head said:

"But as to the taste, which of them is better?"

The driver thought for a moment, then answered:

"To the taste? Hard to say. The taste seems to be alike. But as to the strength, there's no doubt, the Streshnevo wins."

Half an hour later the president gave the order to bring in the prisoners.

When they came in, nine bottles of vodka stood in a row on the table, and the members of the Troika, sitting on a bench with their jaws propped on the edge of the table, were staring at the bottles and saying:

"There, see how much muddier; looking at that one you would grab the clearer one, thinking it to be exempt of foreign matter. But if you're a man with some knowledge, a specialist, so to speak, you will leave her aside; you will need two of her, while here, with one you will get much further."

"How many bottles have we?"

The president began counting them, pressing his finger against every bottle, but at the third he struck the space between the bottles and lost his count.

"Bit more to the right," said Fedor, the driver.

"Honest mother mine! Even my finger has split in two."

"That's the frost, Comrade Matushin."

"Ah, comrades," called out the president, noticing the group of prisoners near the door. What news have you? You all act as if bewitched here, they say. Just wait, we will remove the witchcraft from you. Just a night in a cold barn at the station and there won't be any..."

"Not so clear as that one..."

"And how the devil do you manage to make her!.. Just grabs you..."

"What the deuce! Sixteen bottles on the table? Who's been adding to them?" called out the second member.

"Eight. It's the frost makes it seem so," said the third member.

"Well then, let's sit down. Just for a last drink. After that don't reproach me. There is our country... poor as a door-mouse... pulling together all its forces for the... the reconstruction... instead you here... no,

it's bad, it's bad. Hurting yourselves, hurting your young generation..."

"Every week we should come here, every week, then they'd know..." said the third member.

The president searched with his eyes until he noticed the driver.

"Fedor, you take them. See them safe into the hands of... you know..."

"I'll take them, don't worry."

"Drink without ceremony, brothers," the president called to the prisoners. "We're all simple folk here. That you are guilty, as to that there is no doubt. For that you will have to pay; but right now, drink without concern. The frost isn't abating, and the rooms we have prepared for you are somewhat on the cold side. Hey, Fedor, get the horses ready!"

"And tell us your secret, how you come to be bewitched?" asked the third member.

"Yes, what is the reason?" asked the second member, staring in front of himself and moving backward and forward with little jerks as if someone were pushing him. "A rich country, the people still young, so to speak..."

Half an hour later Fedor, the driver, returned.

The members of the Troika, all three in a heap, sat on the bench with their heads on the table.

The peasants, with their caps in their hands, stood by the door.

"Are they there already?" asked Fedor.

"Seem to have reached there," replied the peasants.

"At them then! I will need your help," said the driver.

The four men grabbed the members of the Troika under the armpits and pulling them up on their backs threw the limp arms over their shoulders, holding onto them in front; carrying them like sacks, they dragged them to the sled.

The second member awoke for a moment, and with a deep sigh, said: "Instead of thinking of the... building... that's what they are doing... And what is the reason?"

—Translated from the Russian
by HELENA CLAYTON.

WEEK-END

by

Carlton Brown

THE electric clock at the end of the schoolroom lopped off the minutes two at a time. Each time it clicked Duck looked up from the open book on the desk before him. Three, three-two, three-four, three-six. Another ten minutes, five more metallic clicks of the clock, and the final bell would ring. Each jump of the minute hand seemed to come an eternity after the last. Duck had a trick of visualizing himself in some future action, looking back at the present, which helped him pass a time like this. At three-thirty he would be riding home on the bus. At four he would be over at Eddy's or down at the Wop's playing ball. This interminable ten minutes of waiting would soon belong to the past. Every second, oftener even, time was leaving the future and going through the present to the past. He had a funny idea about time. He couldn't explain it to most people, but Eddy had understood.

The bell rang. Books were slammed with finality, desk-tops raised and let fall with a bang.

"Homework for Monday;" Mrs. Carroll raised her voice above the din of the class preparing to depart; "take from where we left off today to page one hundred and fifty-six. You'll have a written test on it Monday."

Duck raised the cover of his desk and threw in his History book on top of the others. He wouldn't take any books home this week-end, not even Math. There was a study period first thing Monday morning and only one written assignment to do.

"Hey, Shiek, what're you going to do this aft?" asked Freddy from a few aisles away. They all called Duck *Shiek*. He'd had a couple of fights on account of it, but he really didn't mind. They called him that because he wore his hair in a pomp, slicked down tight on his head with *Stacomb*, and because all the girls liked him and he didn't mind being seen talking to them.

"What's it to *yuh*, Snake-brain?" Tough talk always sounded funny from Duck. He could hold his own in a fight, and he had beaten up a couple of guys who had called him *Sissy* and tried to bully him. Everyone was a little afraid of him since the time he had a fight with Red. He had closed his eyes and run into him with a shower of fists, and Red came out of it with a black eye and a bloody nose. Nobody had called him *Sissy* after that. He was *Sheik* from then on. That was a more manly appellation. Still he wasn't tough by any means. He had only been in Waterbridge for three years, and before that he had gone to school in New York, with the children of artists and rich people. He hadn't quite outgrown that. He lived with Mother then, and that had made it nicer. She was different from Aunt Irene, too; she understood things without their being thoroughly explained.

In the bus going home Jenny the Polack mussed Duck's hair by running her hand the wrong way through it. Duck had been taught never to hit a girl, and his three years in Waterbridge hadn't taken that out of him. He held his black tin lunchbox between his knees and took a comb from his pocket. Everyone shouted "Ah, Sissy!" at him as he put his hair back in place. He felt the tears welling up in him, and the effort of keeping them back made him tremble. He couldn't hit anyone with the whole bus-full against him; it was better to pretend they didn't bother him. That was an entirely different kind of victory they didn't know anything about. That was what Mother had told him to do when kids molested him. Jenny looked at him with a sneer curling the lines around her nostrils and her eyes mockingly lidded. All the kids in the bus were looking at him and laughing now. He tried his trick of thinking himself in the future, but it wouldn't work. God! how he hated these damned ignorant kids! He thought about the best thing in the world would be to be out of Waterbridge, back with Mother.

"Sissy," sneered Jenny, "why don't you do something about it?"

He kept his eyes a little lowered, tried to keep the corners of his mouth from twitching. Suddenly Jenny clutched at his hair again, pulling and ruffling it. That was too much. A hot fury came over Duck and he flung his open hand at Jenny's face. Instantly they were locked together,

Jenny's nails clawing at Duck's face, Duck trying vainly to capture her viciously barbed hands. Her nails gouged three hot, burning lines on his cheek. The pain brought the waiting tears tumbling down his face. Blindly he kicked, threw his fists at his tormentor.

"Hey there! Cut it out!" Roy, the bus driver had stopped the bus and forced his way down the tightly packed aisle. He grasped the back of Duck's neck in a torturing grip.

"You get the hell out and walk, Duck!" he said, increasing the pressure of his grip until Duck's head throbbed with pain.

"All right! gimme a chance!" said Duck angrily. "Take your damn hand off my neck!"

Duck kept his back to the bus windows filled with mocking faces. When the bus had gone out of sight around a curve he walked back into a little patch of woods and threw himself face-downward on the ground. He dropped a heavy weight of sobs that was pressing at the back of his throat. It was almost blissful to be alone with his agony. He poured it into the sympathetic earth. With his eyes closed it seemed almost as though it were Mother, and not the earth, on whose bosom he lay. He lay there a long time, until his tears and sobs had spent themselves and his pain had fallen. He got up and walked on through the woods, his head tilted to one side, pensive, as he walked. After a while he came to a brook, and lying flat on his belly dipped his head into the cool refreshing water. Several times he drew up for a breath of air, then ducked his head under again. He sat on his heels, and holding his head over so the water would not run down his back, squeezed the water out of his hair and dried his face a little with a dirty handkerchief. He combed his hair straight back over his head, up from his high forehead, and stooping once more, dashed his face with the brook water. The clear cool water had washed his fury and anguish away, and he walked back to the road whistling.

He walked the mile or so to the house in a quarter of an hour. The garage door was open and the car was out. That meant Aunt Irene was away; probably Bee had gone with her. High let out at two every day, so Bee always got home before Duck. He was thankful they were out. He

wanted to see how his face looked, bathe the scratched part with disinfectant, think up something to say to Aunt Irene and Bee. He went softly up the stairs to the bathroom. His image in the mirror made him start back. There were horrible red patches under his eyes, and three vivid red lines crossing one cheek. His shirt collar was spotted with blood and dirt. He filled the basin with warm water and poured a generous amount of hydrogen-peroxide into it. No telling what kind of an infection he might get from the dirty fingernails of Jenny the Polack. He bathed his face with the warm, comforting water.

In his room he changed his shirt and put on a clean sweater, then lay down on the bed. The problem of what he should tell Aunt Irene replaced the shame and anguish in his mind. Better to tell the truth, he supposed. Bee would be sure to kid him about it, but then, it would be better to get it over with right away; she would find out at school.

After a half-hour the sound of a car coming up the drive meant that Aunt Irene and Bee were back. He ran to the bathroom and looked at his face in the mirror. The red patches under the eyes had practically disappeared, but the scratches on his cheek were as plain as ever. Now that the moment had come for presenting himself to Aunt Irene and Bee, he felt he wouldn't be able to do it. After they were over their surprise it might be all right, but he hated being questioned about a shameful thing like that. Aunt Irene would fuss about, and talk of calling the doctor and asking the principal of Junior High to keep Jenny the Polack off the school bus. Maybe it would be better to tell her a cat had scratched him or that it had happened climbing a tree. No, better to tell the truth; she would find out sooner or later.

The kitchen door opened. Duck could hear Bee's high voice chatting away, then another girl's voice that he could not immediately recognize. Must be Franny. Yes, it was Franny, he knew now. And probably she'd be spending Saturday and Sunday with Bee. Now she'd know too that Jenny the Polack had scratched his face! That would never do. He wanted to go far away and hide, never show himself to anyone. Too late now. He couldn't get out of the house without their seeing him, and he couldn't stay in his room forever. If only Mother were here,

he thought, she'd understand.

He went to his room, shut the door and sat on the bed, his clenched hands dropping between his knees and his head hung over. He picked up *Kanga Creek*, a book his mother had sent him. It was all about a schoolteacher and a woman. He had read it once; it was a lovely book, but he couldn't make such an awful lot of sense out of it. He opened to the part where the schoolteacher played with the buttons on the woman's dress. That part was good, but he couldn't understand why the schoolteacher suddenly left her and didn't do any more than play with the buttons on her dress. In his place Duck would have done more. He thought probably the schoolteacher, for all his learning, didn't know much about things like that. Reading the book made him forget all about Jenny the Polack and what he should tell Aunt Irene; he was thinking only what a poor sap the man in the book was, and how he would have acted quite differently. A knock on the door brought his thoughts back to the scratches on his face.

"Duck?" It was Aunt Irene. "What are you doing? May I come in?" He opened the door.

"Hello, Aunt Irene," he said, keeping the scratched cheek averted from her gaze, "Where've you been?"

"Over to get Franny; she's spending the week-end with Bee. Why don't you come down..... Oh! Duck, what on earth did you do to your face?"

"Got in a fight," he said reluctantly.

"Oh, dear. Who was it? Come, let me put something on the scratches. You're liable to get an infection."

"I looked after them already," he said. "It's all right. Just a little scratch or two. It's nothing; don't worry." He tried to conceal his irritation with a painful smile.

"But who did it?" Aunt Irene was worried. "Mr. Hunt said he had spoken to the boys about letting you alone." Mr. Hunt was principal of Junior High, and every time Duck got in a fight Aunt Irene called him up and asked him if something couldn't be done about it. This was a constant source of embarrassment to Duck. It made him look like a

squealer to Mr. Hunt.

"Well, don't worry about it," said Duck impatiently. "I'm all right, I tell you. It was some dirty Polack did it."

Downstairs there was the same thing to be gone through with Bee and Franny, only they took a different attitude than Aunt Irene's. Bee and Frances were two years older than Duck, and they both went to High, in a different building from Junior High. Bee was always teasing Duck for some reason or another, and this was a swell opportunity for her to lay it on thick. She laughed at the scratches on his face and his explanation of how he got them.

"Bet Jenny the Polack clawed you," she said. "I don't know anybody else that would do it."

"You know so much," Duck said sarcastically. "Anybody'd think it was you instead of me that got scratched."

By supper-time everybody had forgotten about the scratches. They didn't show so much now, and Bee and Aunt Irene had said all there was to say about them. Of course Bee and Franny would learn the real story going in on the bus Monday, but then, he hadn't actually denied that it was Jenny. He wouldn't let it spoil his week-end, anyhow.

Bee's room was right next to Duck's. As he lay in bed he could hear the two girls talking. He couldn't make out what they were saying but he could hear the steady buzz of their whispering and occasionally a word or two. He tapped on the wall and they tapped back. He thought they were probably talking about him and sometimes it seemed to him he heard his name mentioned. He thought of the schoolteacher and the woman in *Kanga Creek*, substituting himself for the schoolteacher and Franny for the woman in the book. Gee, wouldn't it be swell if Franny would come into his room. Of course she couldn't be with Bee there. Bee was always in the way. If she weren't there he would go right in himself. Impossible to sleep with thoughts like that running in his mind. Should he go to their door and ask if he could come in and talk to them? Bee would just laugh at him, probably; still, sometimes she was friendly and

nice. No harm trying, anyhow. He got out of bed and tiptoed across the floor, softly so that Aunt Irene in the room below would not hear. He turned the knob and opened the door to Bee's room, sticking his head into the dark.

"What do you want?" asked Bee, her voice unfriendly.

He stood awkward and embarrassed, deciding whether to retreat or advance.

"Come on in," whispered Franny, then to Bee: "Let him come in and talk with us."

"All right," assented Bee, "come on in." He tiptoed over to the bed. "Here, get in beside me. Can't trust you on the other side of the bed." The two girls tittered. Duck blessed the dark that hid his blush. It was an exciting moment. He wondered what on earth he could talk about now that he was in the room. He must try not to appear too much of a kid, say something bright and witty.

"I just can't get used to going to bed alone," he said. The two girls tittered, Bee derisively.

"Bet you wouldn't know what to do," said Franny. Her voice was kind and laughing.

"Oh, no? Well you just try me." Again the girls giggled. He knew Bee couldn't stand having Franny treat him as though he were their age, an equal. If only he could be alone with Franny some time.

"What were you talking about before I came in?" Duck asked.

"Oh, things little boys shouldn't know about," said Bee. He hated her for those dirty little digs she was so fond of giving. He'd show her someday how much of a kid he was!

"Say, did you come in here to talk nicely, or did you come in to argue? We were talking about things you don't know anything about." He hated her voice. He thought it would be sweet to hurt her physically, kill her even. Making him look like a fool before Franny! Well, sometime he'd get Franny alone and show her just how much of a kid he was. Just give him a chance, that's all. He'd just have to put up with that damn sister of his now. He'd show her later on!

"What're you going to do tomorrow?" he asked, edging away from

the unpleasant contact of his sister's flesh.

"Oh, I guess we'll find plenty to do by ourselves." Bee wasn't giving him a chance to be friendly. Why couldn't she be a little bit decent to him once in a while? Surely all sisters weren't as nasty as that with their brothers.

"Oh, all right," he said, sitting up on the edge of the bed, "*be* like that if you want to. Good-night."

He was a long time getting back to sleep. He thought how nice it would be to be alone with Franny, Bee nowhere around. He'd show her that he wasn't so much of a kid after all. That schoolteacher in the book was a baby compared to him. He knew everything. His mother had told him all about things like that in a nice way, starting with the flowers and animals and showing how human beings were like them, and he had heard plenty of older kids talking about things like that. How could he prove to Bee and Franny that he knew just as much as they?

Duck was up and out of the house long before the others were awake. He went down to the woods to look after his traps. As usual there was nothing in them. One was unsprung, and it thrilled him to think that an animal had been there and almost been caught. He wished he could catch a skunk sometime. Then he would go to school with the smell of it on his clothes and Mrs. Carroll would send him home for the day. She sent Roger home often, and everybody said he got the stuff on his clothes on purpose. Duck knew it would make him feel bad if he ever caught an animal in one of his traps, but it was manly to hunt and trap.

After he had gone the rounds of his traps he went back through the field of frothy grass and over to Eddy's. Eddy's mother let him in and he and Eddy sat at the table in the kitchen and had a piece of pie and a glass of milk. Then they walked down to Blake's corner. They spent the morning batting and catching flies on the baseball field. Eddy was better at catching than Duck, but Duck could bat the ball the farthest. On the way back home Duck said to Eddy:

"Boy, I bet you wish you were me. Franny's spending the week-end

at our house. You know what that means. Sometimes it's not so bad having a sister."

Eddy was impressed. He was a year younger than Duck, and he respected and admired Duck more than any of the other kids did. Eddy understood about Duck not being like the other kids in Waterbridge. Duck had told Eddy all about his parents being divorced, and his living with Aunt Irene (who wasn't his aunt at all) because his mother didn't think it was good for him to be in the city. Eddy understood things without having to be told all the details. Eddy was Duck's best friend. Duck even told Eddy about Jenny the Polack scratching his and Eddy promised not to tell. That meant something; Eddy didn't talk very much and when he did what he said was worth saying.

When Duck went back to the house for lunch Bee and Franny were in the kitchen.

"Aunt Irene's gone over to get Uncle John," Bee told him. "They're going over to Brockville for the day." Uncle John was a warden at the State Farm in Waterbridge. He didn't come home most nights, and when he did Aunt Irene had to drive him over at six in the morning.

"You cooking lunch?" asked Duck. "Gosh, who's going to be able to eat it?" Franny laughed, and Bee said:

"Well, you don't have to, that's one sure thing."

During the meal Duck and Bee quarreled constantly. Franny didn't take either side but just laughed at them both. Duck liked Franny's red-cheeked open smile. He wished he could have a sister as good-natured as Franny. After the dishes were washed and dried Duck said:

"Come on out to the barn and see my pigeons. There's a bunch of little ones just hatched."

"Oh, you and your pigeons," said Bee haughtily.

"I'd like to see them," said Franny. "Let's go out together." For the first time in two days Duck was happy. He wondered how he could thank Franny for being so nice to him.

They walked side by side past the wood-pile in the yard and in by the deserted stalls in the barn.

"I'll go up first," said Duck with a laugh as they stood before the

steep steps leading up to the top storey of the barn.

"No, let me go." Franny pushed him aside and started up.

In the top of the barn, between the two lofts of hay, Duck had constructed a house for his pigeons. On the door was a big printed placard reading "Love Nest." The man at the candy store had given it to Duck. It was an ad for a new candy, but Duck had cut off all but the words "Love Nest" and stuck it on the door. The coop was big enough to walk around in. Duck opened the door and he and Franny entered.

Duck was a little excited showing the pigeons to Franny. He joked about the way they were made.

"I'll bet you wouldn't know what to do if we were the mother and father pigeons," said Franny.

"Oh, wouldn't I though?" he asked, trying a wise smile.

While Duck was bending over to fix the automatic feeder Franny walked out of the pigeon coop. When Duck followed she was nowhere in sight.

"Hey Franny!" he called, "where are you?"

"Down here," came her voice from in back of the hay in one of the lofts. "Come on down."

Duck started to climb up the bank of hay. Before he got to the top he paused and asked:

"What do you want me to come down there for?"

"Don't you know?" Franny giggled. "Come on down."

He kept still, shaking a little. Could it be true? Had the time he had hoped and prayed for really come? And now that it had come why wasn't he as brave as he had thought he would be?

"I can't." He wanted his tone to suggest a mysterious reason that only he could know.

"What's the matter? Are you scared?" she asked.

"Of course not. You wouldn't understand." He couldn't see her for the hay between them and it made it easier to talk.

"Not today," he said; "I can't today." He hoped there was something that happened to men that would give weight to his explanation. He had never heard of any such thing, but maybe she would think it logical.

"What do you mean, *not today?*" she asked.

"Oh, I can't explain it to you," he said. "It's something I can't tell you about. It's something only men know about."

"Ah, I'll bet you're scared," she said. "I'll bet you wouldn't know what to do."

"Oh, do you think so?" he said. "Well, just try me some other day."

Duck walked back to the house ahead of Franny. Bee was sitting on the sofa reading when he came back. Franny came close behind him.

"Oh, hello Sissy," Bee said in a singsong whine. "So it wasn't Jenny the Polack that scratched your face? Well then, someboy's a liar."

"Oh, shut up!" he said crossly. "What do you know about it?"

"I only know that Roy phoned and wanted to tell Aunt Irene about it. He told me instead. Poor little Mamma's-boy."

Franny laughed. Duck didn't notice that her laugh was warm and kindly. It was more than he could bear. Tears rolled down his cheeks and he could not control his sobs. He trembled with hate for his sister. He picked up a book from the table and threw it at her. It missed, hit the wall behind her and fell on the sofa. Bee laughed.

"I hate you!" he wailed. "I hate you, I hate you!" He rushed from the house. For a long time he walked through the fields and woods, and after that he felt better. He walked slowly back in the direction of Eddy's house.

Eddy was sitting on the porch steps whittling a piece of wood.

"Hello," said Eddy, holding the knife away from the wood and looking up.

"Hello." Duck sat down on the steps beside him. For a while neither of them said anything. Finally Duck cleared his throat and said:

"Let's take our lunch and go fishing tomorrow. We can go early in the morning and stay all day." His voice sounded queer, far away.

"Sure," said Eddy.

"I've had enough of women," said Duck. There was a thick lump in his throat that wouldn't go away and he was afraid he'd cry before Eddy.

"You're lucky, though," he added, "being with your mother."

Eddy turned his tow head down again and started whittling.

WRITING COLONY

by

Vivia Sortor

THE Miramar Bar was almost as cold as the night outside. Four marble-topped tables and a calendar print of a first decade Spanish girl were the only furnishings—with the exception of a shelf of bottles over the bar. The largest table—at the back of the room—was occupied by the *patrone's* family who were eating dinner. Mrs. Narbloch was standing by the door and she hurtled up to us as we entered.

"We had just about given you up," she shouted. Her gaiety echoed against the cold walls.

"Are we late? We have no clock."

"Aren't you lucky!" And she led us to her waiting husband and mother. "This is my husband," she said, "and this is my mother." We all sat down and told each other how long we had been in Mallorca.

"It was awfully cold in the winter," said Mrs. Kranz. "I like to be warm. It's never warm enough for me. Not even in New Orleans."

"I hear you are leaving tomorrow," said I, "Are you going to the Continent?"

"No, we are going home," Mrs. Narbloch replied, "But my mother is staying on the Continent."

"How do you like making charcoal fires?" asked Mrs. Kranz.

"Oh," David shrugged his shoulders, "I just go out and gather up a lot of driftwood on the beach and make up a fire in a hurry and fry a couple of eggs and let it rest."

"Housekeeping," said I, "doesn't amount to much with us."

But Mrs. Kranz was not content to leave it at that. "I do think," she went on, "that these houses are not made for cold weather."

Mr. Narbloch sat in the corner and said nothing. We had been told that he had written four unpublished novels. He seemed depressed.

Mrs. Narbloch scattered genial words that were lost in the bareness of the room, and tried to get hold of the *patrone* to give us some drinks. She wore a beret on the back of her head and green rope-soled shoes. A drink, to her mind, would make the party begin to move. But the *patrone* was still busy with his dinner, so we continued to talk of the cold weather that they had had before our arrival.

"But it will be warm soon," I ventured.

"Oh, yes, there will be mosquitoes." This was Mr. Narbloch's first remark. Mrs. Kranz continued. "I don't care where I am so long as I am warm. You couldn't get any heat in the houses. We had a sort of stove, but that was no good."

"I hear that you two write," said Mrs. Narbloch.

"When we are not sleeping," I agreed.

She laughed. "It was so cold here in February that we went to bed in the afternoons. We slept from seven-thirty in the evening to seven-thirty in the morning, and then we went to bed for three hours in the afternoons to keep warm."

"I didn't have my siesta this afternoon," said her husband.

"No, we were packing."

At this point a large gentleman with a very red face arrived and sat down beside me. And the *patrone* with his wife began stirring from their dinner. The wife came over and tried to take our orders. She had never heard of the *fundador* that David wanted, so he got up and pointed out the chartreuse bottle which was on the shelf. He would have that. I took vermouth and the rest ordered anisette with soda-water. Mrs. Narbloch said that it reminded her of absinthe and that she liked soda-water. Mrs. Kranz said that Mr. Narbloch liked soda-water too, that he drank it even in his wine. The man with the red face thought that he would have rum instead. From his accent he was German. While the *patrone's* wife was endeavoring to straighten out our drinks another lady came in and was discovered to be the wife of the red-faced gentleman. She sat down beside him and giggled and said that she would have rum too. She wore a tight little black hat over a set of very pinched and peaked features. She must have been about fifty. The talk shifted to prohibition.

"I think," said the wife of the red faced gentleman, "that it is just human nature. Now even with me—just a little thing like," she fumbled, "like coffee. I hardly ever drink it but some days when I'm thirsty I'll do anything for some coffee."

Her husband began to tell me about how they had lived in the port for four years and that there were many people, English and American, coming and going all of the time, but that he and his wife stayed.

"Except two years ago," said his wife. "Two years ago, you know, Ferdinand, when I went to England. It took me thirty-three hours," she leaned forward and nodded her head brightly, "and when I reached Paris a beautiful Cook's man met me and put me on the train for Calais. It was very quick and he was such a beautiful Cook's man, he was so beautiful to me. I don't know what I should have done without him. I don't go home very often you see. My husband and I live right here."

I could hear snatches of Mrs. Kranz's description of a funeral which had taken place that afternoon. We had seen it go by the house—a gay procession following the pale blue coffin and horses decorated with blue ribbons. Mrs. Kranz had attended the ceremony.

"—and the girl's mother stood on the balcony and made an awful fuss. She pretended that she was going to throw herself over. She looked vicious and they say she is just as vicious as she looks. And I saw some of the women laughing at her."

"Are you going to be here long?" asked the German's little wife.

"About six months, I think."

"There will be mosquitoes," said Mr. Narbloch, "and the flies on the beach bite."

The arrival of a small man with a grizzled moustache and sleepy protruding eyes produced several exclamations of "the Major!" He sat down and ordered cognac. It was evidently not his first. He was at the other end of the table and I did not hear any of his contributions to the conversation until much later when his wife arrived and shouted as she crossed the room, "You told me you were going to the Marisol. Why didn't you let me know where you were going? I was sitting reading this book all the time." Even then he only mumbled. But she was

evidently satisfied for she sat down beside Mrs. Narblocb and began to gossip in an undertone.

The wife of the red-faced man commenced telling me how fortunate we were to live at the other end of the port. "You will be so much cooler in the summer," she said. "It is a regular pocket here. The mountains keep the breezes from us. But you will have a cool breeze all of the time. And you will be quiet there. The natives make such a noise out in the street in the mornings."

The Major took my attention to the other end of the table by a sudden loudness in his voice. "Are you Americans?" he demanded.

"Yes," said David "We are Americans. But I am often taken for Norwegian,—or Russian."

The Major considered, "Is she American too?"

"Oh, yes, she's American."

The Major told Mrs. Kranz that he thought we were Norwegian. He was silent for a moment, and then—"Your sister?"

"Oh, no, she's not my sister."

Another silence while he thought it over. "Your cousin?" he suggested.

"No, she's no relation."

"She's very pretty," said the Major, and he examined his cognac. After a few moments he took advantage of a temporary departure of the German to come over and sit beside me.

"He's drunk," Mrs. Kranz whispered to David. "You'd better be careful of him." Then she moved over next to the Major's wife and told her in an undertone that "they aren't married."

"Are you American?" the Major asked me.

"Yes, I'm American."

"I think you come from the north of England."

"You do? Why?"

"I think you come from the north of England," he repeated. "You have the look of it." And his eyes grew sentimental. "You know, I like Americans," he said.

"Yes?"

"Yes, I like Americans. You know all the Americans I have met have been charming. And their ladies—they are charming too."

"That's pleasant to hear. Not very many British tell us that."

"Yes, I like Americans. And I have met a great many. I was in the war, you know. And they were all charming."

"There are more Americans than English in the port now," said Mrs. Narbloch.

Mr. Narbloch preferred the English. "They are politer," he said. "If you asked an American if he knew of a house to let here he would do this—" He put his finger to his nose and pushed his head back, closing his eyes scornfully. "But the English—" he waved his hand gracefully in the air.

Mrs. Narbloch thought it was time for a second round of drinks. She and her husband explained that a most convenient Spanish word to know was "*misma*" which means "the same."

Mrs. Kranz turned over her glass. She was not drinking any more that evening. Her temperance stimulated the peeked little woman to further remarks about Prohibition. She told us how it was in England now that alcohol is obtainable at only certain hours. Her husband said that there was a small town in the north of England where they had Prohibition on Sundays and the people all bought up barrels of beer and drank all day on the Sabbath.

"In Brussels," said Mrs. Kranz, "they make you buy three litres of wine. You have to buy three litres if you want any at all." One had the feeling that Mrs. Kranz never drank wine in Brussels.

"Haven't you had something published, Mr. Bell?" Mrs. Narbloch asked David. "It seems to me that I have heard your name."

"A few things—in magazines."

"I am sure that I have seen it. Verse?"

David nodded.

"It seems to be a writing colony now," she went on. "All of the painters have left."

"It's no wonder," said Mrs. Kranz. "It's so cold."

"Yes," said Mrs. Narbloch. "I think we will scratch this off our list

of paradeses."

The red-faced man told me about his home life. "When my wife and I separate," he said, "we go out on the balcony. We have a large balcony. I always like to take part in my wife's doings."

"Oh, Ferdinand," said his wife. And she giggled.

"Yes," he said, "I don't do very much. I don't read and I don't write so I have plenty of time."

"Oh, now, Ferdinand." His wife put her hand on his knee and giggled again.

"No, I don't read and I don't write. I don't study any more." They both laughed.

"And you know," the Major's wife whispered to Mrs. Narbloch, "she was so rude to me that I just haven't paid any attention to her since."

The second set of drinks was nearly finished. Over against the wall the *patrone* and his son slept on either side of a table with their hats over their eyes and their mouths open.

Mr. Narbloch yawned. "I didn't have my siesta this afternoon," he said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Narbloch. "We are all sleepy. And we have some packing yet to do."

David got up and bought four star-shaped cookies from the *patrone's* wife. They were very pretty and could not be bought anywhere else on the island.

"I am sorry you are leaving tomorrow," I told Mrs. Narbloch.

"I am sorry that we did not know you sooner."

"I am so glad," the pinched little woman fluttered, "that you are going to be here a long time."

"Thank you. So am I. Good-night."

"Good-night."

We ate the star-shaped cookies on the way home.

HAPPINESS

by

Michael Foster

WHILE the sun's flame passed from the western sky, and the high waters of the flood tide faded from apricot to violet-ash, old man McCluskey sat in the window of his house on Alki Beach and smoked his pipe. A tug coming upsound with an immense tow of log rafts was just perceptibly rounding the buoy: he had been hearing the laboring throb of its engines for an hour or more. In the next room, his wife was moving methodically about, setting the table and humming somewhat uncertainly a popular song which, he supposed, she had heard at a movie that afternoon on her weekly shopping trip downtown.

Across the darkening bay the lights of the city glimmered against the smoky purple wall of night looming in the east. In the valley beyond Harbor Island a tongue of orange fire licked skyward from the stack of a steel mill and subsided to a pulsing red glow. Old man McCluskey arose finally and went into the kitchen. Pausing in the lighted doorway, he saw his wife, a heavy, pleasant woman whose hair was still quite dark, peering anxiously into the oven.

"The cake has fallen," she said, glancing at him absent-mindedly, "And I did want to have a real nice supper for the children."

Old man McCluskey pulled out his massive silver watch and blinked gravely at it.

"It's seven-nine," he stated with the scrupulous exactitude of a man who has nothing but leisure, "They'd ought to be here pretty soon, now."

"It's a long drive down from Vancouver." His wife closed the oven door and stood up. "It's mighty nice they could come down to spend Sunday with us, I think. Since Emma got married we haven't seen much of her."

"Eddie is a good boy." Old man McCluskey fumbled with the buttons of his shabby brown sweater. "I wonder, now... Do you suppose he'll bring me some more of that English tobacco, this time? That's a fine smoke, I'll tell you."

"Maybe. He's a good enough boy, all right, I guess. Emma is real fond of him, and she says he treats her elegantly. But he'll never get ahead in that job of his. I wish they'd move down here to Seattle. I'm sure Eddie could get work here. Then we could have Emma right near to us."

Old man McCluskey grunted noncommittally and went out on the back porch, where he knocked the ashes from his pipe against the railing. A little wind had come with the change of the tide, and a moored row-boat, somewhere down there in the darkness, was bumping irregularly against a pile. The wind smelled of salt and tide-flats, tinged faintly with smoke: it was freshening from the southwest, he noted carefully.

Returning to the kitchen, he took off his sweater and hung it behind the door. After washing his hands and smoothing his straggling gray moustache, he put on his well-brushed blue coat and looked at his watch again with a touch of impatience.

He was on his way to the back room to refill his pipe when he heard three loud honks on an automobile horn in front of the house. As he turned toward the door he had a glimpse of his wife in the kitchen, hanging up her apron and hastily smoothing her hair. Before he could reach the door it flew open and Emma came in laughing.

"Hello, Pa," she said, giving him a perfunctory kiss, "Oh, there's Ma—— well, we got here, all right." She was a large, robust girl, much like her mother. He looked past her to the doorway, where Eddie, a tall, studious-appearing young man, was waiting bashfully. The two men shook hands stiffly and stood vaguely smiling while Emma and her mother moved off toward the bedroom, chattering volubly.

"Well, Eddie," old man McCluskey said as the bedroom door was closed firmly, "let me help you off with your coat, now. Make yourself at home." He noted with elaborate unconcern, as he took the coat and hung it on the hall-tree, that a round package, done up in pink wrapping

paper, was in one of the side pockets.

"Come on in the parlor, Eddie," he added heartily, "supper is all ready, and as soon as the womenfolks come out, I guess we'll be eating."

They sat in the parlor, beginning a tentative dialogue concerning business and politics. Suddenly Eddie stood up with an exclamation.

"I came pretty near forgetting something," he muttered, and went out into the hall. He came back a moment later, carrying the pink package.

"Here," he handed it to his father-in-law, "I just happened to remember you liked this. So I thought I'd bring it along."

Old man McCluskey unwrapped the paper with fingers which trembled slightly, and held up to the light a can of the English tobacco.

"Now, that's mighty fine," he said. "You didn't need to do that, Eddie. You shouldn't have done it. You'd better let me pay you for it."

"I should say not." Eddie leaned back and lit a cigarette. "No, sir. I just brought that along in the hopes that you'd like it. They say it's pretty fair tobacco. I don't smoke a pipe, myself."

"Best I ever smoked," the old man told him earnestly, "and I'm much obliged to you, Eddie. I'll just take this along, now, and put it away where I can get at it first thing in the morning." He stopped in the doorway and looked back over the top of his spectacles. "I've got a little of my regular mixture left, about enough so's I can finish it up tonight. Then I can start smoking this tomorrow."

When he returned, his wife and Emma had come out of the bedroom, and they all went in to supper. He ate silently, enwrapped in tranquillity, while Emma and her mother carried on an animated conversation. Emma did most of the talking, recounting details of her new life in Vancouver, and occasionally appealing to Eddie for corroboration or approval.

As he finished his cake, he became aware that Emma was speaking to him.

"What did you say?" he asked, looking up.

"I wanted to know if you liked your tobacco that Eddie brought you," his daughter demanded. Before he could answer, his wife spoke brightly.

"Well, now, that was real nice of Eddie, I think," she said. "But isn't it awful expensive? I know from the way Father talks about it, it must—"

He gazed at his wife in alarm. But Eddie made a modest gesture.

"Oh, it didn't cost much," he assured her, "I was glad to do it."

After supper he went back to his favorite chair by the window, pleasantly conscious of the voices of his family from the kitchen, where his wife and Emma, with Eddie to help, were doing the dishes. Far to the northward, beyond the measured flicker of the West Point lighthouse, he could make out the blurred lights of a big steamer emerging from Admiralty Inlet— probably a Jap liner, he thought. A level bank of cloud, blowing in from sea, was slowly blotting out the stars in the west, and the wind was lacing the black waters of the bay with ghostly white crests.

He heard the doorbell ring, but he paid no attention to the subsequent murmurings in the front part of the house until his wife came into the room and switched on the light.

"There's a young man here to see you," she spoke urgently, "he says he's a newspaper reporter— from the Post. He says he wants to see you personally."

He stared at her in profound perturbation.

"What does he want with me? Maybe it's some other McCluskey he wants."

His wife shook her head.

"No, he wants to see you," she repeated. "He says he'd like to interview you. You'd better go in. Here, let me—"

She approached him and began fussing with his tie and brushing a few crumbs of tobacco off his vest with her hand. He saw that she was enormously impressed, and at once he assumed an air of calm sufficiency. With deliberate steps he preceded her down the hall. In the parlor he found a florid young man sitting on the sofa, smoking a cigarette with indifference. Emma had just finished saying something pleasant about the weather: Eddie leaned silently in the dining-room doorway, with the dish-towel still in his hand.

"Ah— Mr. McCluskey?" the reporter asked, arising and shaking

hands, "I'm Smythe of the Post. Won't you sit down?"

Old man McCluskey took his seat in the large wooden rocking chair by the table and placed both hands upon his knees.

"What can I do for you?" he enquired firmly.

"Well, Mr. McCluskey, I am the Inquiring Reporter," the visitor said. "Every day I go out and ask people questions—important questions, such as everybody is interested in—and then we run their answers in a column called the Inquiring Reporter. You probably read it every morning. Now, Mr. McCluskey, I want to ask you for your definition of happiness."

He took pencil and paper from his pocket and prepared to write. Mrs. McCluskey crossed the room, flurried and beaming, and stood behind her husband's chair.

"Mr. Smythe wants you to tell him what happiness is, Father," she prompted, "I guess you mean true happiness, don't you, Mr. Smythe?"

"Well, I'd like to have Mr. McCluskey tell me his idea of happiness," the reporter answered. "Almost everybody has a different idea of it. Some people say 'money to do good with'—that's what Mrs. E. A. Perkins on Phinney Ridge said; I just finished interviewing her—and others would like a good time, like Miss Krafft—she's a stenographer in the Marine—"

"Oh, but Mr. Smythe," Emma interrupted. "don't you think that true happiness, that is, I mean real, true happiness, comes from—"

Old man McCluskey cleared his throat.

"Where did you get my name?" he demanded. "What made you come out here to see me about that?"

"Well, what we do, Mr. McCluskey, is to pick out some names out of the City Directory at random, and then we call up the circulation department to make sure they are subscribers to the Post. Then I go out and ask them questions, like this one. So now, if you'll just tell me, I'll write your answer down. What would you say is your idea of happiness? Whatever you say is O. K. with me."

"Happiness? Well, I don't know. I hadn't thought about it, exactly," old man McCluskey said uncomfortably.

Sitting there, surrounded by his expectant family and watched by

the stranger, he stared at his veined hands upon his knees and made a determined effort to think. Since he was under the impression that it was the proper thing to do in this connection, he thought of his wedding day: and the swift, blurred recollection of a rainy day in autumn came to him. A day when the sea was gray, and the raw buildings of the new town clustered on the hill wore an air of desolate nostalgia against the forests and mountains. They walked alone, he and a slender, dark woman, from her house to the white church above the harbor. She was an orphan, and she had sewn her wedding gown herself, copying it carefully from a picture in a magazine. Because she wanted a fine wedding, they had worked together the night before, decorating the church with late flowers from her garden and evergreen boughs from the forest. There were people waiting in the church, when she left him at the door. The ceremony was as she had planned it, as fine a wedding as could be wished. Afterward, they walked back to her house, which she had scrubbed and swept and set in order, and where then, with the help of a neighbor woman, she cooked a wedding supper... But he remembered most clearly coming into her room that night, after he had smoked a pipe alone on the porch, to find her awaiting him...

He realized suddenly that the reporter was talking to him confidentially as he wrote on the paper he was holding in his hand. But as old man McCluskey strove to fix his attention upon what the young man was saying, another picture intruded itself, for the space of a heartbeat, upon his mind. It was of a day in summer, and the sea was glittering under a nothern sun. As he leaned out the pilot-house window he could see a line of peaks, blue and silver, above a long, dark smudge of wooded shore away to the east. His fishing boat was rolling on a slow groundswell: on the scrubbed foredeck Bill Soames, his mate, was coiling a line, and he looked up with a seamed grin as McCluskey shouted something... But that, of course, had nothing to do with the question he was supposed to answer for the paper.

"So I'll write that down." the reporter was saying quickly. "There. That ought to be enough. Now, Mr. McCluskey, I'll just read you what we've said, and you see if it's O. K.

"Happiness is found in unselfishness, and we are always the most contented when we are doing all we can for other people—let's change that to others. Now—in my own case, my happiest moments have come from having kindly thoughts and from helping people, both loved ones and friends. True happiness cannot be bought with money. I have always believed in following the Golden Rule—there's no need to quote that, everybody knows it, don't you think, Mr. McCluskey?—and that should be enough to make anyone happy throughout life. My definition of happiness would be to do one's duty, lead an unselfish life and be kind to one's fellow-men."

"How's that?"

Old man McCluskey blinked and fumbled for his pipe.

"Well, I guess that's about the size of it, all right," he said.

Mr. Smythe stood up and shook his hand.

"All right, Mr. McCluskey," he smiled cordially. "That's fine. Now, if I can borrow that photograph of you there on the piano, that will be all. We'll mail it back to you tomorrow. I've got a photographer outside in the car, but if I can have this picture we won't need to call him in. Ah, that's fine. Goodnight, everybody."

After the reporter had gone, old man McCluskey went back to his window and finished his pipe in silence. Lying in bed beside his wife that night, he listened for awhile to the drowsy murmur from the other bedroom where Emma and Eddie were staying, and to the regular, heavy breathing of his wife. He thought with pleasure of the can of English tobacco Eddie had brought him, and as he fell asleep he could almost feel the pleasant bite of it upon his tongue. He would smoke the first pipeful of it, he decided, while he took his morning walk along the sea-wall after breakfast.

ARRANGEMENT IN BLACK

by

E. P. O'Donnell

M R. Colt was inspecting his assembly plant. He stopped in the welding department and watched a workman putting a spot weld on the saddle of a corn cultivator.

Ellick also stopped, a few feet away. Mr. Colt, the plant superintendent, had observed Ellick following him about for some time. From the side of his face he saw Ellick now, standing close by with something important to say. He heard Ellick clear his throat. Mr. Colt continued to watch the goggled welder bowed over the cautious fusion of metals. Ellick waited, nonchalantly unfolding and folding a worn sheet of cleansing chamois. Ellick's presence in the Birmingham Branch of the Universal Farm Machine Company was beginning to annoy Mr. Colt.

"Well?" Mr. Colt presently asked, turning without moving from the place he was standing.

Ellick grinned at the concrete ceiling. "I put the new Number Two Disc Harrow by the entrance, where she shows up good," he said.

"O. K.," said Mr. Colt. He drew closer to the welder. Ellick stood fingering the chamois. He was a light mulatto, hired to ply a feather duster in the showroom upstairs, where agricultural implements were displayed for visiting hardware dealers. In charge of the resplendent display room, with no designated superior to watch him, Ellick loved his job. It was reputed to be the easiest in the plant, except Mr. Colt's, and it gave him a sort of distinction among his fellows.

To insure his future security in this job, Ellick had for some time helped to make Mr. Colt's job more secure. That is, he was an informer. Discovering an infraction that had escaped more authoritative eyes, immediately Ellick would contrive casually to talk with Mr. Colt. When Ellick made such an approach, usually Mr. Colt, sensing something amiss, would invent a trivial topic as a vehicle for the pregnant hint, the

real object of Ellick's overtures.

"O. K., I said, Ellick," Mr. Colt repeated over his shoulder as he turned to leave. "Keep the new model stuff to the front of the showroom."

Ellick hurriedly gained Mr. Colt's side and walked along with him, still wearing a sleazy grin. "Yes, sir. Right up front. I cleaned it up nice. I found some brown stuff on one of the wheels, like it rolled over some brown stuff downstairs on the floor. Look like chew-tobacco. I don't know. Like brown pulp. Nasty, dirty brown pulp, like. All off now, though. It wasn't much. All off now."

Mr. Colt looked at Ellick, his keen gray scrutiny shifting from one to the other of the mulatto's mournful eyes.

"I see," he prompted.

"Rolled over it downstairs," Ellick continued. "Either in the wheel assembly or after it passed the wheel assembly, because it was right fresh, like."

"Oh, fresh, eh?"

"It could be the inspection department, except nobody there wouldn't hardly chew on the job. But that's the last place the machines go before they tote them upstairs."

"Some new man somewhere, don't know the rules."

"Yes, sir. It *could* be chew-tobacco. All off now, though. All cleaned up."

"All off, eh? Well, considering you got it all off, we'll just forget about it. Get back to your work. Wait! Better go tell the chief clerk to read Local Rule Ten to you, Ellick."

Local Rule Ten prohibited any interruption of the Superintendent by employees, for any reason whatsoever, while the Superintendent was engaged in his Daily Inspection of Equipment and Personnel.

Ellick went up to the general office and stood by the chief clerk's desk. The chief clerk was busy. Ellick waited. The chief clerk rose from his chair and hurried across the office, elbowing Ellick aside. The mulatto held his hat and waited, unnoticed, gazing around at the busy clerks and stenographers. His long face was stamped with sultry insolence.

Downstairs, Mr. Colt wrote in a note-book. Soon, the foreman of the inspection department would be summoned to the telephone. Thereafter this foreman would be especially vigilant, and very soon one of the inspectors would be told to take five days off for violating Local Rule Six against using tobacco in the plant. Mr. Colt's discipline was flawless. In the Production Manager's office at Pittsburgh, the status of Birmingham, indicated on the globe by a blue and orange tack, was A Decimal Two, the highest rating among forty assembly plants encircling the globe in a wavering, multi-colored belt. Discipline had done it.

Mr. Colt leaned out of a window to blow his nose; then, walking down the unloading dock where an orderly line of truckmen were pushing wheeled burdens many times heavier than themselves, again he thought of Ellick. And his pensive cud was as gross as gravel.

A crafty yellow boy, that Ellick! Skinny and slick. Taking everything seriously, above all himself and his easy job. Knowing that he could read and write, talk and dress, dance and love—better than any other colored man he knew, Ellick was rigidly aloof. But his cold disdain was studied, of a kind that readily melted into flabby superiority or fawning servility, according to the occasion. He was known to carry an incisive tongue in his head, and in his pocket a knife as quick, two weapons his world had learned to respect.

The present tacit compact between Mr. Colt and Ellick was obviously cherished by the latter, but to Mr. Colt the thing was getting irksome, filled with unforeseen and hence doubly galling difficulties. There are some underlings with whom one simply dare not get familiar, no matter how legitimate the cause.

At first, when Mr. Colt—newly promoted from the assembly line in one of those fell reorganizations following a personal visit from the Manager of Production—had permitted himself to grow receptive to Ellick's manoeuvres, the mulatto had conducted himself with due and unobtrusive finesse. But lately, with Mr. Colt inextricably obligated to him, Ellick was beginning to mar the delicacy of the bond. Despite tactful warnings from Mr. Colt, Ellick had even come to ignore certain Rules, both Local and General. Smoking back of the works during

hours. Neglecting to remove his hat when passing through the hallways between eight and five.

In this organization, where the very air was properly charged with restraining suspicion and stimulating insecurity, such conduct, permitted with impunity, must very soon engender in Ellick's more acute fellow workers certain unthinkable speculations. A ticklish mess, fraught with no end of obscure risks, and imperatively awaiting adroit disposal.

Mr. Colt with tightened lips resumed his inspection. He peered into a lavatory. He frowned and twisted his wrist-watch into view. Twenty minutes before lunch-time, and there were four men in the lavatory! But he was pleased to note that the walls, today, were free from pencilled epithets concerning the foremen. The floor, too, was without blemish—a clean, square expanse of battleship gray, with the tell-tale corners painted spotless white.

Proceeding to the paint department, Mr. Colt stopped at the paint foreman's desk. He opened the drawer and found all in order, no unfinished business or personal rubbish stored away. He leaned on the desk and surveyed the department, tapping his foot and briskly crackling his wad of chewing-gum. Then his restless eyes, prowling among the busy workers, fell upon the broad, sweat-polished torso of Hacksaw, the floor and equipment cleaner, who was wielding a lye-soaked mop.

Hacksaw was a huge negro, pure in blood, with tough skin that an occasional splash of lye did not seriously damage, a brass religious medal on his neck, and incredibly large muscles. In the discordant blur of whirling belts and stuttering riveters, the big negro's lips moved in a song. The song was soundless, yet clearly articulated in the negro's face, his shining eyes, and his massive body that moved in perfect rhythm with the husky cough of a nearby exhaust pipe. It was as though Hacksaw were using a song to clean the floor with.

Mr. Colt tarried, fingering the unclean diamond in his immaculate shirt front. Hacksaw was another employee whom Mr. Colt resented. The negro had been sent to Mr. Colt a few months previously by Mr. Colt's brother, who was Warden of the nearby State Quarry. Hacksaw had served a sentence for criminal assault on a dance-hall negress. The

Company frequently hired men who had served a first prison term. They proved to be excellent workmen, only too glad to find a position and especially amenable to discipline.

Something about this negro disturbed Mr. Colt — had always disturbed him. Hacksaw was humbly industrious. His whole demeanor betokened a child-like humility. But somehow, his humility had a strange origin, for it seemed to have no bearing on his relation to his superiors. Instead of his destiny being in the capable hands of his foreman, it seemed to be in his own hands. The foreman did not seem to perceive this; but Mr. Colt did, and it vexed him.

Furthermore, Hacksaw worked cheerfully. There was no knitting of the brows, no simulation of diligence when a superior appeared. His pace was always the same—active enough, yet clearly the pace of a man whose task required but a fraction of his vitality, the remainder being withheld, husbanded for use in other spheres. That was a bit beyond Mr. Colt. Here was a man of an inferior race, miraculously reinstated to respectability, surrounded by grimy workers engaged in the precarious battle for bread—hemmed in by hoarse foremen, clang metal being shaped to the uses of the farmer, mercury lights that turned men's faces green, the sheen of sweat on bulging muscles, the whine of wheels, the pound of pistons, the swish of steam, the roar of imprisoned fire—whose task was yet such an impersonal thing that he could lose himself in a song whose phrases not even the singer could hear. Mr. Colt was nonplussed. On some vague principle that he had never had time to identify, it nettled the very core of his life's creed.

That was not all. Hacksaw had a way of unconsciously performing amusing capers while he worked, without falling foul of any definite Rule. Saving himself a walk across the floor by squeezing a piece of soap from between his fingers, through the air and into a distant bucket. Doing a kind of grotesque dance with his feet while his arms were properly engaged in bearing a heavy burden. He never tried to be funny. He never lost his dignity. But there was always this infernal suggestion of a song or dance about everything he did. A bad influence! A subtle menace to discipline. That was it! Subtle menace!

"Having any trouble with Hacksaw?" Mr. Colt asked Collins, his Assistant.

"Him? Not a chance. He always puts out, Chief."

Puts out! Puts out! That was all they could see, these so-called assistants—the surface signs of industry. They missed the subtle menaces, the deeper forces that rot an organization from within!

On his way to his private office after lunch, Mr. Colt passed through the showroom. Ellick was wiping a window. Mr. Colt ostentatiously wet his finger in his mouth and rubbed a stain from the bright red handle of a plow.

"Well, Ellick, do you understand Local Rule Ten now?" he asked.

"Mr. Kimmel was busy," the mulatto answered. "I kept waiting by his desk until lunch time, Mr. Colt."

"I see. Lunch might get cold, eh?" Mr. Colt stood with his hands behind him, like one concealing a weapon.

"After lunch, too, he was busy. I'll go—"

"Listen, Ellick. Come back here. Let me tell you something." Mr. Colt wet his lips, then changed his mind. "Never mind, Ellick. Clean your windows."

That afternoon, Mr. Colt telephoned the Assistant Superintendent.

"I want to put that yellow nigger Ellick down there working with Hacksaw in the paint," he ordered. "Ellick cleans the drip-pans and hooks. Hacksaw tends to the floors and carriages. I'll send Ellick tomorrow."

"Put Ellick with Hacksaw?"

"Yes. With Hacksaw. Your tractor wheels come in?"

"Two carloads from Memphis Branch. You want two men cleaning in the one department?"

"Yes. Two men. Ellick and Hacksaw."

"They'll be in each other's way. There ain't enough work for two men in the one shift."

"You've got a man goes on at midnight. Put him elsewhere. Let

both these men work four to midnight. Christ! do I have to tell you how to do it?"

"It won't work, Chief. First place, they can't work together."

Mr. Colt, alone in his office, smiled. "How do you mean, can't work together?"

"They don't click."

"You don't say!"

"You know Ellick. High-toned nigger, fulla education, and so on. He's always kidding Hacksaw. They don't click."

"Kidding him? In this plant?"

"Oh, I don't know. But he kids him about being so black, and so on. Calling him Snowball, they tell me, and like of that."

"And of course, in our Units Assembled Per Man Hour, we've got to allow for such things. The color prejudices of our showroom nigger. What would you suggest? Maybe we'd better write Pittsburgh."

"O. K. I'll put him down there and see if he can do the work. They won't get along. Hacksaw's going to scare that yellow nigger away from here. I think—"

"If Hacksaw chases him away, what's wrong with chasing *him* away?"

"Sure. That's just the trouble."

"I don't get you at all, Collins. What's the idea, wasting all this time on a couple of niggers?"

"I don't want to lose Hacksaw."

"Too bad. You'd better worry about unloading those wheels."

Locked in his private lavatory with a cigarette, Mr. Colt could vizualize the outcome as clearly as if he already had before him the Foreman's Statement of Employees Discharged.

At first, the two men, both puzzled yet accustomed to the sudden and unexplainable shifts in technique that characterized the Company's methods, would be wary—too bewildered to think of their mutual enmity. Especially Ellick, the crafty one, remembering the Rule Ten matter, would be wary. Docile, ostensibly resigned and wary. This truce might last for days, but it would soon pass. With their suppressed bitterness toward each other growing deeper, ultimately some trifling

spark would ignite their hoarded animosity. Then Hacksaw, as Collins had foreseen, would scare the yellow nigger away, perhaps even thrash him.

What! Fighting on the job? That speaks volumes for your famous discipline, Collins, but why disturb me with these trifles? Have we run out of discharge slips?

And that was that. As sound as a sabot!

Mr. Colt disposed of his cigarette and energetically sought his private office to grapple with more pressing affairs. Pittsburgh had increased his production schedule for the coming month. Outside, a generous rain laved the parched valley, a splendid cotton-shower.

"How's your floor and fixtures look?" Mr. Colt a week later asked the foreman of the paint department.

"Fine! Clean as a whistle at quitting-time. No threads, no paint."

"Both your cleaners on the job, eh?"

"And how! Little bit hard on Ellick, but he's sure putting out. Of course Hacksaw's right on the job. That's one working nigger. Always singing. He's O. K."

"They get along all right together? You want to watch that."

"Sure. What's Collins' idea, Mr. Colt, putting Ellick down here? He wants to see which one handles the work best and then fire the other one, I guess."

Mr. Colt ceased to chew his gum. He looked at the foreman. His face brightened. "Well, how did you come to think of that?" he asked.

The foreman confided in his assistant. The next day it was gossipped around that Hacksaw and Ellick were being pitted against each other. No bets were made. Hacksaw was considered an easy winner.

The foreman, mindful of instructions, watched closely, but saw no signs of belligerence. There was little change in Hacksaw's behavoir. He did not believe all this talk, although he did not mind the white men, eager for novelty, having their fun.

"You two fellows want to get together and double-cross them, like

they do on the assembly line when the boss matches them up," one man advised Hacksaw. "If you break your back and win now, you gotta keep it up always, remember."

Hacksaw only chuckled. He was unruffled. As before, without additional effort and as a matter of course he accomplished more work than Ellick did. Stealthy words of encouragement from those around him were disregarded. He maintained his pace, no slower, no faster, and continued to ignore Ellick. He mildly disliked Ellick.

Ellick now attacked his drip pans and drying-hooks more savagely. His eyes continuously sought the leisurely figure of Hacksaw, for whom he never lacked a vicious slur. Within a week, worn to the gristle, he pretended that a muscle in his back was strained.

"You've got no muscle that I can see," said the plant surgeon. "Nothing but bones back here."

The back was bound with plaster and Ellick reassigned to his work. He was now certain that his back was in fact badly injured. At lunch time, he stood before Mr. Colt's office, looking through the glass door. Mr. Colt was in the office talking to a retail dealer. Ellick remained before the door until the nearby switchboard operator told him Mr. Colt had phoned he could not see Ellick today. Ellick returned to his job.

Later, when the two were working near each other. Hacksaw accidentally backed into Ellick's bucket, spilling part of its contents.

"Watch your goddam flatboats, Black!" said Ellick.

Hacksaw chuckled. "Take yo time, son. What's got aholt of you today? Can't we give this job time to dygest?"

"Mind out for yours and I mind out for mine, old cockancoffee nigger."

Hacksaw, flaying the clotted paint with a wire brush, was amused. His brush-handle described a slow, reaping motion, and he spoke gently, a suave utterance following each stroke:

"Jes take yo time—

"Ah bin thinkin bout you—

"Lemme tell you—

"You go'be callin me niggah—

"An niggah—
"Tell Ah'm go' fix you up—
"So you go' be black'n me—
"Some day you don be caffle—
"You yah me, Mistah P. I.?"

Ellick's knife was out. Hacksaw's brush fell to the floor. He stood swaying, as though on the brink of an abyss. He loomed frightfully massive, slowly toward the mulatto, shining black with much sweat. Ellick crouched into a corner, bleating, his knife forgotten, his feet pawing the concrete for a hold to help him through the wall. Hacksaw laughed at this and turned away. Ellick grasped his knife more firmly and gained his legs. Hacksaw wheeled and saw. Impatiently he approached the mulatto on firmly planted feet, blazing with quiet rage, reeling like a hungry black flame, and reached into the corner with great slow hands. He lifted the squirming yellow body above his head and tossed it through a wide gap of space, plumply into a vat of black enamel, a steaming round void whose surface opened to the impact like gulping black lips.

The Assistant Superintendent called Mr. Colt on the telephone.
"There's been a fight in the paint department," he announced.
"A fine example of your discipline, Collins, but why bother me—" "Ellick's—" "Sure, I know. Ellick and Hacksaw. Know all about it and I'm busy. Keep your shirt on. Fire them both. Get the department running again. I guess your men are all standing around settling the bets and—"

"Listen, Chief! Hacksaw chunked Ellick in the enamel tank!"

Holy Christ a lawsuit!

Mr. Colt hurried from his office, through the general office where neat, orderly clerks worked in long rows, and entered the plant. The walls, floors, ceilings, were spotless, The great pilasters were numbered in heavy black, indicating the proper storage place for the smallest bolt or nut. Order everywhere! Bustling figures reaching for the proper tool; workers bearing burdens to a definite place; goggled shapes hunched over sparkling emery-wheels, peering closely for accuracy; foremen

lithely weaving through the din—everyone peaceably industrious. That there should be anyone with sufficient irreverence to bring disorder here! Somebody had been negligent! He'd find out! Things didn't just happen. They were permitted!

Hacksaw was lacing his street shoes. There was a policeman. Hacksaw had a cigarette behind his ear. He would put it into his mouth, then remember that he was still in the plant and replace it behind his ear.

"He pull a knife on me," Hacksaw was telling the policeman. "Git somebody take mah banjo home, up in mah clothes lockah. Clara Jeff. Fi'-fo'-teen Cramberry Stree'. Somma yall try and find at knife. He pull a knife on me, Cap. Big, shop frawg-stickah. Ah seen it."

A lawsuit! A lawsuit!

The knife was found, months later, when the enamel vat, now called the soup tureen, was drained for cleaning. Hacksaw had been sentenced to five years. Ellick's wife had been awarded damages. Mr. Colt had received a severe reprimand from Pittsburgh for lack of discipline, and forfeited his yearly bonus. It was not until his plant took the new Waste Elimination Plaque that he forgot that reprimand.

Hacksaw, the ungrateful, he never forgot. Basking again in the good graces of the distant Manager of Production, he liked to picture Hacksaw paying his price with a twelve-pound hammer in his hands and a frown of concern on his face—humbled at last beneath the kind of discipline that, after all, only the taxpayers could exact, from certain types.

And the first fine Sunday afternoon he could spare, Mr. Colt drove out to inspect the big peach orchard of his brother, the Quarry Warden. As the two strolled through the orchard, overlooking the Quarry, Mr. Colt asked about the negro, Hacksaw. Yes, Hacksaw had been sent to the Quarry. Why, certainly they watched him closely! But Mr. Colt had his doubts.

Later, with his own eyes he spied Hacksaw, deep in the earth, breaking rocks. To look at the negro, one would have thought that little was changed but the rhythm of things. Obviously, he found little

difference between the weight of a mop and that of a sledge hammer. The indolent guard didn't seem to mind his pausing to savor the sunshine. He worked slowly, just fast enough, thought Mr. Colt, to keep awake. Clearly, he was using but a fraction of his strength, saving the remainder for other days, no doubt. Holding out on the people. There! Singing as usual! The slow circle of his descending maul would break, driving a careless phrase into the rock. Another circle, another phrase:

*Ah'm slow in the shoulders—
But mah backbone's built for—
Ah said it's built for—
Ah'm talkin bout fun!—
Ah'm slow in the shoulders—
But mah backbone's built for fun!—
Mama skin a rabbit—
For yo no-count Proticle Son!*

Mr. Colt left with the feeling that the matter had not been satisfactorily disposed of.

M A R T Y R

by

Martha Foley

“**A**ND then I'll see visions.”

Emily rocked back and forth on the sandpaper that was scratching her bottom.

“Visions? You mean like the Virgin Mary and the Angel Gabriel.”

“Yes. Only I won't see an angel. I'll see God himself.”

“But God is invisible.”

“Not when you're a saint and have visions like me.”

Edna stopped flipping the jackstones from the palm of her hand to the back.

“Are you a saint?”

“As soon as I have a vision I'll be.”

“How are you going to get a vision?”

“By suffering.”

“I know—like a toothache.”

“Not exactly. You can't help a toothache but the sufferings a saint does is on purpose. Like my sitting on this sandpaper.”

“But that hurts.”

“Of course it does. Everything hurts a saint.”

“Well, I don't want to be one then. I don't like being hurt.”

“You'll never see God then.”

“I'll wait until I go to heaven.” Edna returned to her jackstones.

“But you can't be sure of going to heaven unless you are a saint.”

“Twosy, threesy. I'll pray to God to go there. Foursy. Fivesy.”

Emily got up carefully so the sandpaper wouldn't slip out of her drawers. She wished she had enough money to buy a hairshirt. One sheet of sandpaper didn't stay put in place. Perhaps when she got her Christmas money her mother would take her to the big store downtown

and she could get one in the shirt department where her mother always bought her underwear. But Christmas was a long way off and she would have to do the best she could till then.

She looked disgustedly at Edna and her jackstones. Edna would never get anywhere always playing. As for herself she was going off to her retreat now for fasting and praying. She walked stiffly across the street and into the next yard. She had to hold her hand on her back to keep the sandpaper in place. She kept hitching it up. If people saw her walking with her hand lower down they might misunderstand and think she was like her little sister who sometimes forgot to go to the bathroom. It was a long time since she had forgot to go to the bathroom. Not since she was in the first grade and Miss Lavey had caught her playing hookey. She hadn't meant to play hookey but she couldn't go into the classroom like that so she just stayed outside looking in Cunningham's. There were lots of things in Cunningham's window, licorice shoelaces and penholders with colored water hand fish in them. But wasn't she silly then, though? All Miss Lavey had to do was look out the school window across the street to Cunningham's and see her. If she ever wanted to play hookey now she wouldn't just hang around the school.

Emily looked all around her back-yard carefully. She couldn't be a hermit and have a retreat in the wilderness if anyone saw her now. Heliotrope was picking her way from picket to picket along the fence, but no one else was in sight. She would have to pretend Heliotrope was a lion infesting the wilderness. God would understand that a cat was the best she could do for wild animals here in Boston. Perhaps when the circus came to town a lion or a tiger would escape. The lives of the Martyrs were full of lions.

She looked all around the yard again. She could hear Delia washing dishes in the kitchen. It was all right then. Everything was a wilderness. She got down on all fours and crept into a hole between the back steps and the wall. This made a much better hut for a hermit than under the syringa bush. No one would spray the hose on the back steps as they had on the syringa bush.

Funny the way the light came through the cracks in the steps. There

was a funny smell here too. Closed in and dusty. But she must pray.

Oh, God, in your grace and loving kindness look down on this wretched mortal. Oh sacred heart of Jesus I implore you to forgive me all my wickedness. It was right through that crack there she had lost the ring with the green stone that came around the stick of candy. No matter how much she looked she could never find it. The next time she came into this retreat she would bring Johnny's sand shovel and dig up the dirt around the place. Oh, divine solicitude, extend your infinite mercy to this repentant soul. Oh, heavenly father, heavenly father, heavenly, if she couldn't find the ring perhaps she could ask old Mr. Cunningham if he couldn't get some more of those sticks of candy with rings around them then perhaps she could get a blue or purple stoned one instead oh heavenly father who gave your son for thy people's sake bless me, your erring child. Now three Hail Mary's.

Now let's see. What else was it saints did? Oh, yes. Fasting. She wouldn't go in and ask Delia for a piece of bread and butter. And now she thought of it, she was hungry. All the better. She'd fast all the time between breakfast and luncheon. She had been going to buy one of those nice big three-cent ice cream cones when the hokey-pokey wagon came along too. But she'd rather have a halo than an ice cream cone. Only halos must feel awfully warm on your head all the time blazing away like that on Saint Cecilia's head in the piano picture. How could you wear a hat then? And did saints take off their halos when they went to bed? She would have to ask someone about that.

But she'd better be praying again. She'd say three Our Father's this time. She would like to have a vision this morning if possible. She would pray as hard as she could then perhaps a vision would come. For a vision she would like to see the little angels, the cherrybubs on clouds. She didn't want to see purgatory or hell the way some of the saints did. And she'd just leave wait awhile before seeing God himself. He might ask her some questions about the catechism and she wasn't sure of the last lesson. The little angels that were always peeking out of clouds in the holy pictures would be very nice to see.

Each time she said an Our Father she would say very hard at the

end and please dear God give me a vision of the cherrybubs.

Emily prayed. The hot summer sun beat down on the steps under which she crouched, bees buzzed in nearby shrubs, sounds of domestic endeavor came from the open kitchen window. It was an ordinary Boston back-yard of a warm June morning. Which is the trouble and why I don't get a vision, she thought. I am not even tormented by fiends like Saint Anthony, I must make a great sacrifice for the Lord. He doesn't like just sandpaper.

She took the square of rough paper out of her drawers and put it away in a corner of the wilderness retreat. I'll try it again some other time, she said. She squeezed herself out from under the stoop just as her brother and two other boys came through the back gate.

"Oh, look at Helen! Watcha doing under there, Helen?"

"Looking for a jackstone I lost." Dear God forgive me for telling a lie. I can't be a hermit if they know where I'm being one. They'll all want to be hermits too and hermits can't play together. Anyway the Herman boys are Protestants. I can't tell Protestants about such sacred things.

"Walter just found something."

"What?"

"Look, he found this medal on the sidewalk."

"Let's see."

"Tisn't yours?"

"Who said it was? I said I wanted to see it."

"Well, you sounded like you were going to say it was."

"Please let me see it. I'm not going to say it's mine. I promise. I don't even know anyone who lost a medal."

"Here then." Walter held out in his hand a bright yellow disc. On one side was a cross. On the other was a picture of the Virgin with the Christ Child.

"Oh Walter. You shouldn't have that. That's a Catholic medal and you're Protestant."

"There! I told you. I knew you'd want it."

"I don't want it. But I know it isn't right for a Protestant to have something that's Catholic."

"Huh! I found it and it's mine. I can do whatever I please with it. I can throw it up in the air or burn it or roll it along the ground."

"Walter! That's sacrilege. You'll go right to hell."

"Who's said so? If anyone'll go to hell it'll be you for telling me what to do with something I find."

"I'm going to tell your mamas on both of you. Talking about hell. I'm going right away and tell your mamas—"

"Tattletale! Tattletale! Carry home the cow's tail! We're not doing anything."

"You are so! You are using the word hell in ordinary conversation. And mama said you can only use it when praying."

"This is not ordinary conversation. This is religious."

"But—"

"You shut up right this minute."

"I won't."

"All right then. I'll sing a hymn and you know you can't interrupt a hymn. Holy God I praise Thy Name, Lord of all above, I praise Thee—"

The three small boys remained quiet until Emily finished the hymn.

"Walter, let me hold the medal."

"No. You'll keep it."

"No, I won't. I promise."

"Cross your heart and hope to die?"

"Yes. Beat me black and blue."

Emily examined the medal on both sides. "This is a holy object."

"Give it back to me."

"I'll give you a cent for it."

"No!"

"Two cents."

"No, can't you see it's bigger than a quarter?"

"Three cents."

"I'll give it to you for a nickel."

"Three cents are all I have. I was saving up for a big cone. Strawberry and chocolate mixed."

"I like chocolate and nut better. All right. Where's your three cents?"

Emily pulled a small imitation silver mesh bag out of her pocket. In it were a handkerchief, some beads and three coppers. It was a very great sacrifice she was making. She hadn't an ice cream cone since the little one-cent one last Friday and this was Tuesday.

The Protestant heathen took the three cents eagerly.

"Come on. Let's go out on the front sidewalk and wait for the hokey-pokey man."

The boys departed. Holding the medal reverently in an outstretched hand, Helen squeezed her way back under the steps.

"Now, please dear God, let me have a vision."

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